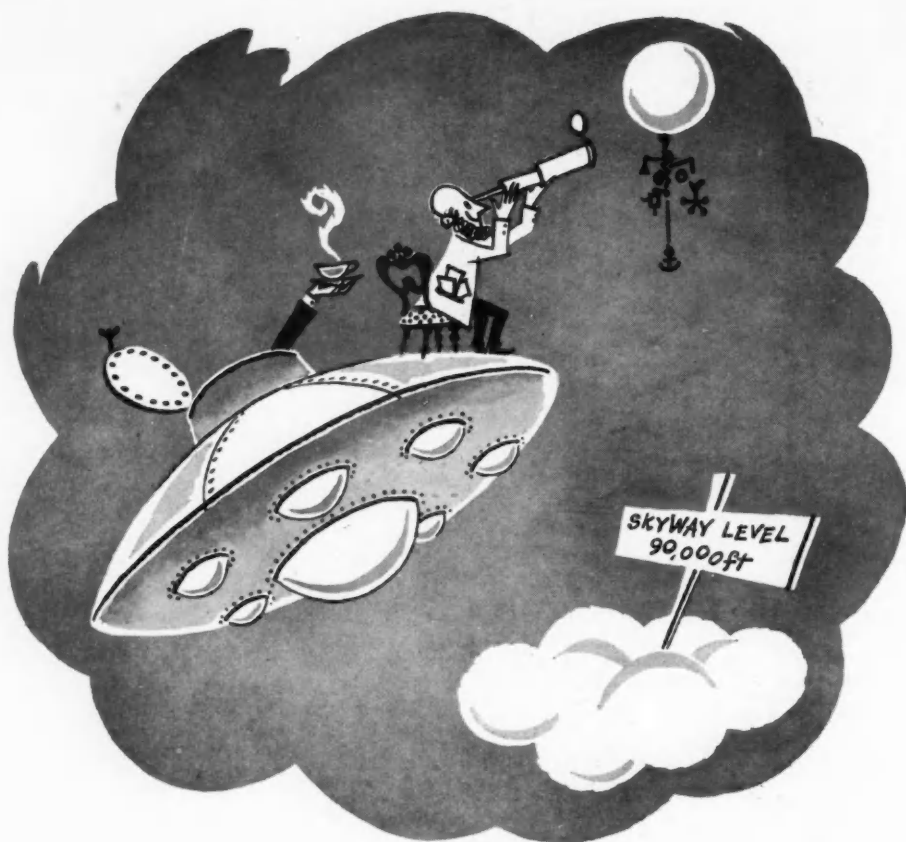


# Design



McGILL-U. L.  
JUN 21 1955  
PERIODICALS

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When scientists of Bristol University decided to extend their atomic research into the stratosphere, they faced many difficulties. They needed a balloon to lift their instruments to a height of 18 miles. The envelope had to be made of material no thicker than a hair, yet able to withstand the ultra-violet rays that would strike it, and temperatures that would reach as low as 108°F.

**Up and up - to 90,000 ft!**

below freezing. What they sought they found — in 'Alkathene', I.C.I.'s brand of polythene. The same material is being increasingly used — to come down to earth — as a packaging material for foodstuffs and other commodities in daily use. 'Alkathene' is also used to insulate the new transatlantic telephone cables, to make cold water pipes, and all manner of fancy goods from lampshades to washing-up bowls.

*Thus, and in a thousand kindred ways, I.C.I.'s research and production are serving the Nation.*



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JUNE 1955

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# Design

## *H55 - A modern milestone*

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO the Swedes staged an exhibition in Stockholm which launched their now world-wide reputation for modern design. The Swedish modern movement has since come of age, and both friendly and unfriendly critics have detected a slowing down of tempo, perhaps even a bourgeois respectability in ideas and shapes which, a generation ago, were making everyone sit up, some to scoff, others to applaud.

The Swedes themselves are the first to recognise the dangers of complacency. This summer they are staging a jubilee exhibition in Hälsingborg, covering the same fields of architecture, interior design, industrial design and the arts and crafts, as a kind of stocktaking to see how far the new ideas have developed, and what is in the pipeline for the years to come.

But, 25 years after the Stockholm exhibition, the Modern Movement has become more or less international, drawing its inspiration from many sources - from our own Cotswold pioneers, from the intellectual energy of the pre-Hitler Bauhaus, from post-war Italian romanticism and from American preoccupation with machine production.

The vigour of modern design stems from many factors, though each country lends its own interpretation. So, very sensibly, the Swedes have this time planned an international pavilion where many nations will each show a flat, typical in plan of modern architectural thought and typical in furniture and furnishing of modern interior design in each country. Although the rules stipulate that all the furnishings and equipment shall be in normal production, the fact that these are exhibition flats is bound to act to some extent as a forcing house; the exhibits will not be bread-and-butter, run-of-the-mill productions but, more likely, selected examples of the best standards of advanced design that are suited to the modest space allowable.

It is this element of prophecy that should make Hälsingborg a first port of call between June 10-August 28 for all manufacturers, designers and journalists whose interest it is to keep abreast of the times. It would take a month of Sundays to explore the same trends and to make the same comparisons by separate visits to the individual countries, even if such examples could easily be run to earth.

In all seriousness, we urge readers of DESIGN not to miss this opportunity. Twenty-five years is a long while to wait till the next occasion.

# POINTS and POINTERS

## THE PRICE OF LEADERSHIP

We are beginning to realise today that to be first in the field has its drawbacks as well as its advantages. In countless ways we in this country are now paying the price for having led the world in the industrial revolution. Three events in recent months have focused attention on this situation. The first and perhaps most important is the publication of the British Transport Commission's report on 'Modernisation and Re-

equipment of the Railways'. Before the first World War British trains were the cleanest and most efficient in the world. Brass trimmings were always polished, paintwork was kept clean and in good order. The big terminal stations with their enormous spans were the expression of confidence and pride in the use of new constructional techniques. Now our railways are generally regarded as among the dirtiest, the least comfortable, the most old fashioned of

*The scale of the main concourse in the new London Airport passenger building can be seen in this photograph taken before the building was completed. Some aspects of its design are discussed on this page.*



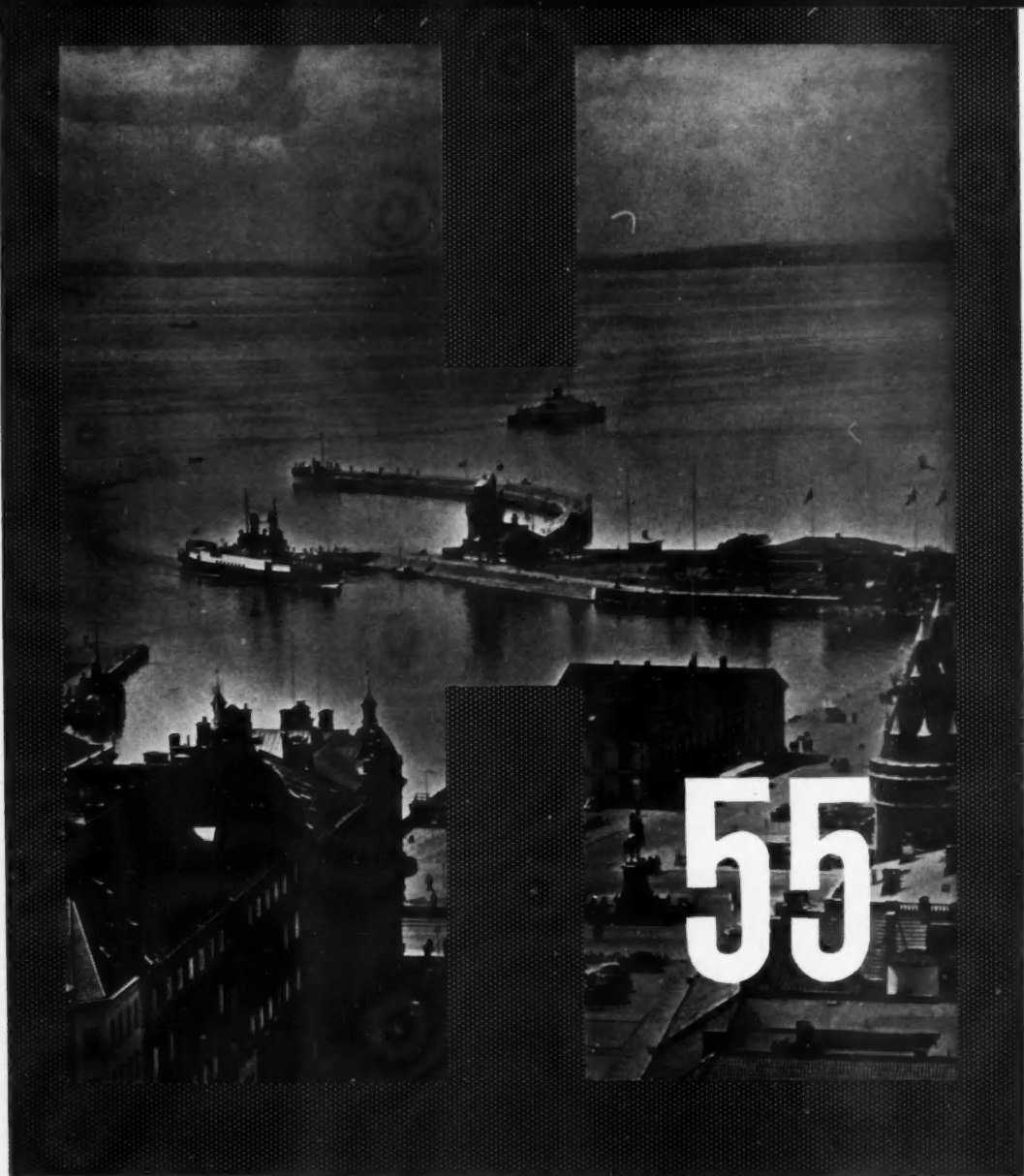
any. Achievements abroad in the new Dutch system, in France, the U S A and elsewhere show something of what we may expect under the new modernisation plan.

Although the relationship may not seem obvious the second event, the opening of the new hotel Leofric in Coventry, provides tangible evidence of a new urge to break down the lethargy which has crept into many of our older industries. The great age of hotel building was itself a direct result of the growth of our railway network. But there have been few new hotels in recent years and nothing to destroy the notion that the pompous eclecticism of their design is an intrinsic aspect of the hotel atmosphere. The Leofric does that once and for all. The most modern hotel in this country, it provides a feast for the eye as well as for the palate, and a standard of comfort to satisfy the most discriminating of needs.

The third event, the opening of the new South East Face Passenger Building at London Airport, throws a different light on the problem of growing old, for air travel today has reached a stage roughly equivalent to that of the railways in this country during the nineteenth century. The interiors of this new building, an expression of the wealth of design talent in this country, make an impressive gateway to Britain, as can be seen from the accompanying illustration of the main concourse. Let us hope that the mistake of the railways will not be repeated here - that its appearance will not be neglected and allowed to become an excuse for slovenly service.

Special articles in *DESIGN* will deal with these three events. The September issue will contain an extensive survey of railway design in which achievements abroad and their significance to our own railways will be illustrated and discussed. An article on the interiors of the new passenger building at London Airport will be published in our next issue, while the Leofric hotel, briefly illustrated on page 45, will form the subject of an article in the near future.





**O**PENING on June 10 at Hälsingborg will be the most important exhibition of architecture, industrial design, home furnishings and crafts to be held in Sweden since the Stockholm Exhibition of 1930. To be called 'H 55' it has been organised by the City of Hälsingborg and the Swedish Society of Industrial Design under the patronage of King Gustav Adolf and Queen Louise. The Council of Industrial Design has a special link with the exhibition for its director, Sir Gordon Russell, is a member of the honorary board – the only one outside Scandinavia. A preview of the British exhibit is given on the following pages.

**S**ELDOM CAN AN EXHIBITION have been so fortunate in the choice of its location. 'H 55' has been built around the harbour and out along a projecting quay with water on almost all sides. Behind is the city and beyond, green hills and beech woods. In this setting the exhibition will demonstrate its theme – to show in his home, in his communications, in his surroundings at work and leisure, how modern man has created an environment to express and satisfy his needs. Care has been taken to see that it will not be a 'dead' environment. Many of the exhibits will be in use – thus in the classroom of a school, children will play with paint brushes and clay under, one is glad to hear, the supervision of a teacher; shops and offices of various kinds will be operating and serving the visitors to the exhibition. There will also be concerts, dancing, sports events and other activities which will make 'H 55' a festival as well as an exhibition. An important event of the early days (June 21–23) will be an international conference at which the subject 'Good design for everybody – reality or Utopia?' will be discussed by distinguished delegates from the USA and many European countries.

The exhibition itself will be divided into three main sections – firstly, the public environment in which will be shown the offices and schools already mentioned, part of a modern passenger liner, the uses of electricity, gardens and playgrounds and so on; secondly, an industrial design section with domestic consumer products both from Sweden and other Scandinavian countries chosen by a jury; and finally a homes section. In this latter part, the largest and most important exhibit will be the international pavilion in which typical flats from various parts of the world, chosen and furnished by the countries concerned, will be displayed. It is here that Great Britain will make her major contribution to 'H 55'. As a result of the appeal by Sir Kenneth Lee, guarantees by British industry and other organisations (see page 13) have enabled the CoID, which has no funds of its own available for overseas exhibitions, to contribute to this international display.

The flat, one of an existing type designed by Eric Lyons for the Parkleys Estate, was chosen for the CoID by Michael Patrick, Principal of the Architectural Association School of Architecture, and has been erected by the Swedish exhibition authorities. The interiors were designed by his wife, Jo Patrick, who has been responsible for designing a number of show houses for the Council. The object is to show British home planning and furnishing at its best and, unlike other similar projects in this country, there has been no strict budget to limit the choice of furnishings. Consequently the imaginary occupants of the flat have been regarded as fairly prosperous – a businessman, perhaps, his wife and son, aged 13, who are able to afford some of the more costly pieces. There are for example original paintings by Sutherland and Paul Nash and a drawing by David Jones. Nevertheless the flat is in no sense what the Americans describe as 'custom designed' – there are no pieces specially made for the exhibition, no specially built-in units which are not incorporated in the original flat plan. The only alterations are a slight extension of the sitting room and the omission of some storage space to allow for easier public access. Otherwise the flat is identical to the existing ones in London and the furnishings are all in current production in Great Britain. The designer was particularly anxious to avoid the bareness of some exhibition flats and has introduced many details to express the interests of the imaginary occupants and

## HOW TO GET THERE



### By air

DAILY services from London to Copenhagen by the Scandinavian Airlines System and B.E.A. Price £28–£39 3s return. Travelling time: about 2 hours 35 minutes.

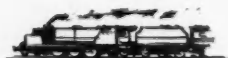


### By sea

SAILINGS four times weekly on Tuesdays, Thursdays and twice on Saturdays by Swedish-Lloyd steamers from Tilbury to Gothenburg. Price: £17 15s–£29 15s return. Passengers travelling by this line can obtain free rail tickets between Gothenburg and Hälsingborg. Travelling time: about 40 hours.

United Shipping Co steamers sail daily from London to Copenhagen. Price: £17 18s 2d–£27 4s 4d return. Travelling time: about 27 hours.

From Copenhagen by rail to Hälsingborg and thence by ferry to Hälsingborg. Price: 12s 11d–17s 11d. Travelling time: 1 hour 40 minutes. There is an hourly train service from Copenhagen to Hälsingborg, and a half-hourly ferry service across the Straits to Hälsingborg.



### By rail

DAILY departures from Victoria by the Nord Express Route, via Dover, Ostend, Brussels, Hamburg, Copenhagen and Hälsingborg. Price £18 11s 6d–£35 9s 1d return. Travelling time: about 30 hours.

The Nord West Express Route, from London via Harwich, Hook of Holland, Hamburg, Grossenbrode, Gedser, Copenhagen and Hälsingborg, also provides a daily service. Price: £18 14s 5d–£31 6s 3d return. Travelling time: about 28 hours.

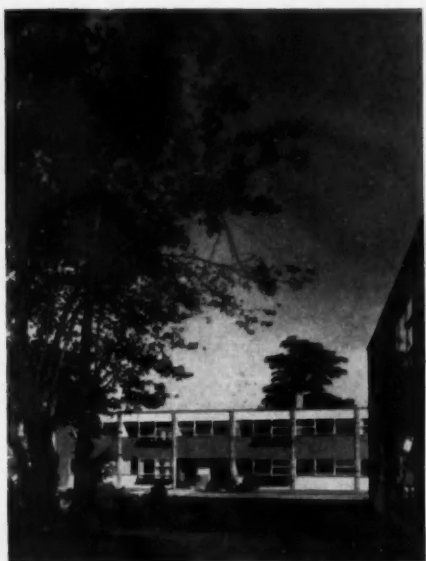
All prices are subject to variation.



*The study which can be divided from the living room by folding doors.*

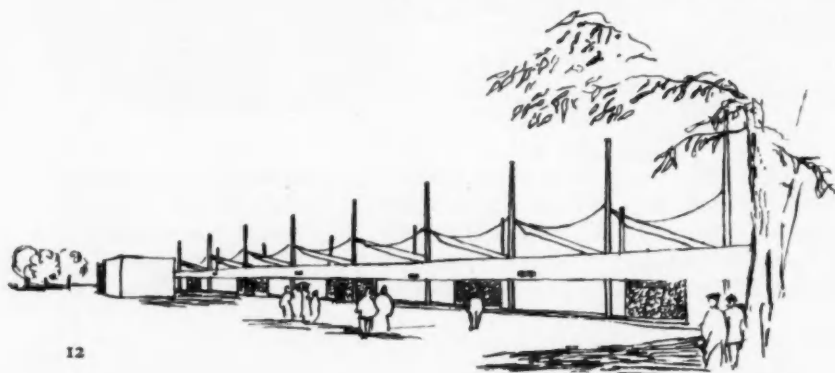
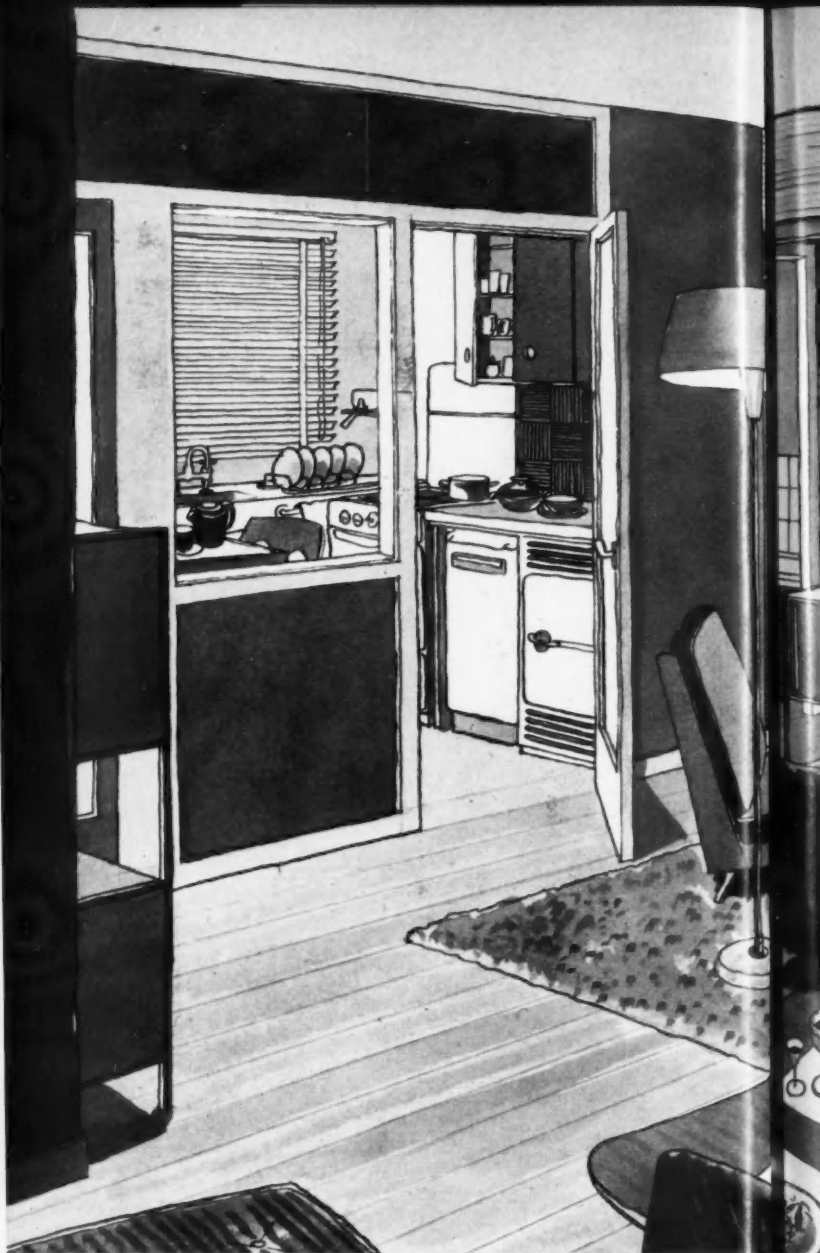
their characteristically British way of life – the bowler hat and umbrella in the hall, the wife's embroidery, the boy's interest in natural history, the early morning tea tray in the bedroom. How the flat will compare with exhibits from other countries we must wait until

the opening to see. In the meantime, the accompanying illustrations, with drawings specially prepared for DESIGN by Hilton Wright, show how the flat will appear to visitors, and how it will fit into the general scheme of the exhibition.



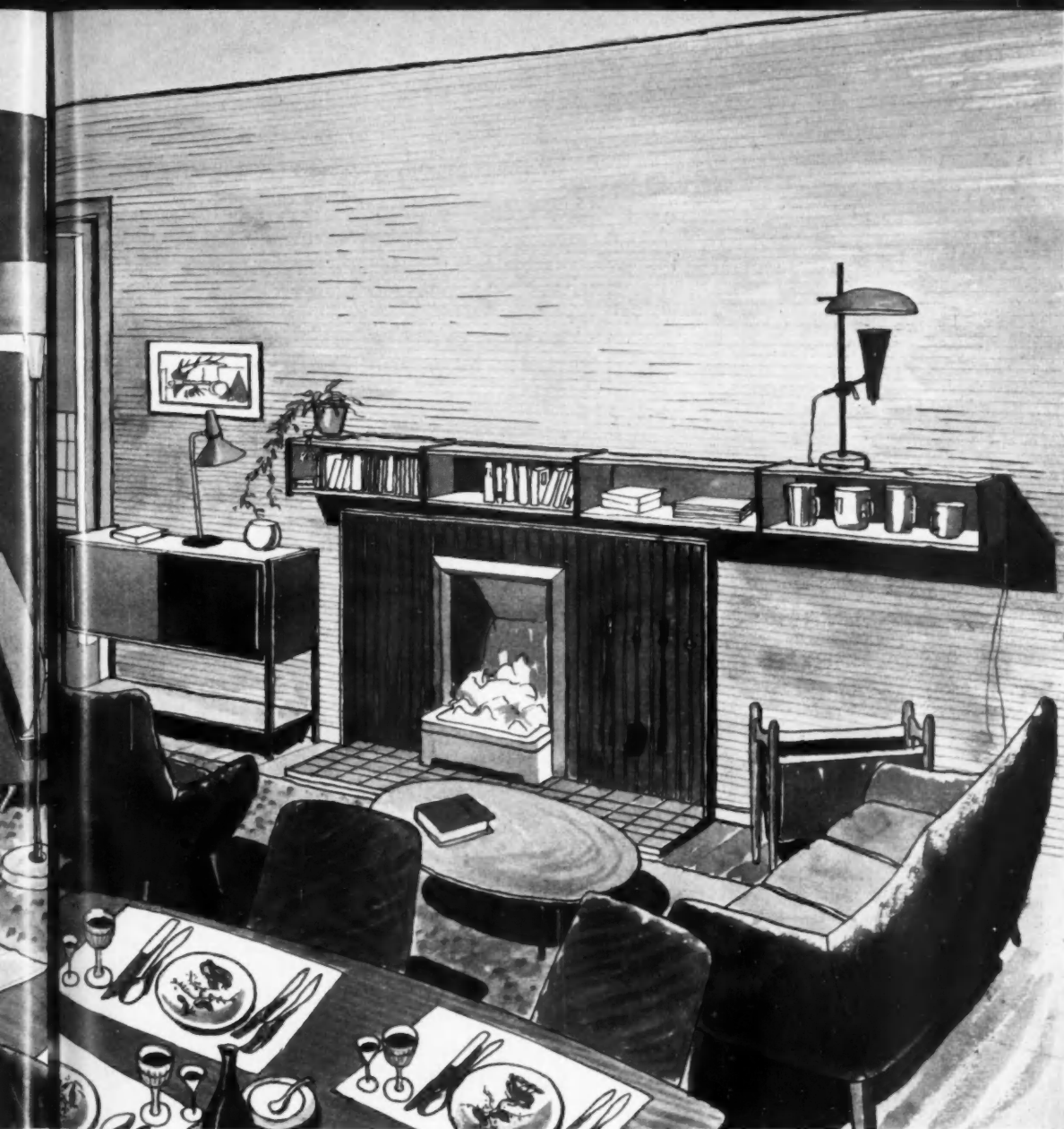
ABOVE A view of the Parkleys Estate, for Bardgood Estates Ltd, from which the flat erected at Hålsingborg was chosen. The architect is Eric Lyons.

RIGHT The living-dining room. Woodwork is white, walls are pale coffee colour except for the fireplace wall which has a black and white paper. This scheme is repeated in the study giving a unity of appearance to the whole area.



LEFT A sketch of the international pavilion in which typical flats from many different countries will be shown. The pavilion is close to the main exhibition entrance.





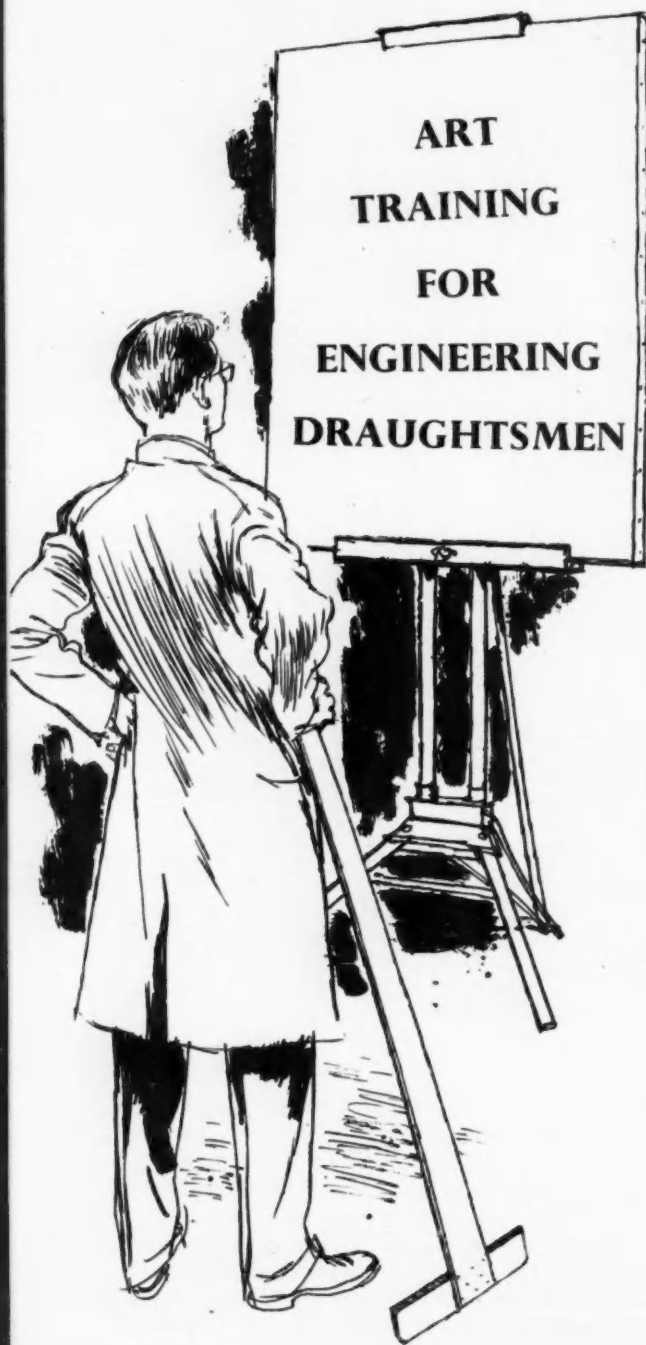
### Guarantors

The cost of staging the British exhibit has been met by private subscriptions on the initiative of Sir Kenneth Lee. The other guarantors are:

The Architectural Press Ltd, British Furniture Manufacturers' Federated Associations, The Building Centre, Carter & Co Ltd, General Electric Co Ltd, 'House and Garden', Liberty & Co Ltd, The National

Magazine Co Ltd on behalf of 'House Beautiful', The National Union of Furniture Trade Operatives, I. Newton Esq, The Royal Society of Arts, The Wall Paper Manufacturers Ltd, British Nylon Spinners Ltd, The Furniture Development Council, Glazed and Floor Tile Manufacturers' Association, Heal's (Wholesale and Export) Ltd, The English China Manufacturers' Association, Odham's Press Ltd on behalf of 'Ideal Home'.





150,000 draughtsmen are employed in British industries. 96 per cent of the £210 million worth of consumer goods produced annually by the engineering industries is designed by the 3,700 engineering draughtsmen who can be classed as product designers. Much has been written and spoken of the value of the art-trained and technically competent industrial designer. This article describes the result of a survey into a complementary issue, the nature and value of the artistic qualities and training of engineering draughtsmen.

THIS SURVEY ATTEMPTS to assess the artistic competence of the average draughtsman employed or likely to become employed in the design of those engineering products in which a pleasing appearance is a desirable quality. It also endeavours to discover the nature of the art training undertaken by engineering draughtsmen or made available to them. It does not set out to discuss the wider issues of 'art in industry' - issues which have been exhaustively examined elsewhere.

First of all, however, it is necessary to deal with some differences of opinion which exist as to the precise meaning of the term 'draughtsman'.

*"An engineering draughtsman can be regarded as an apprentice designer, the status of engineering designer being attained after a number of years of experience together with the appropriate professional qualifications."* - AN OFFICIAL OF THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERING DESIGNERS.

*"Draughtsmen and designers are two completely different things. One is the creator, the inventor. The other is the executor, the craftsman."* - A CHIEF ENGINEER.

For the purpose of this article the term 'draughtsman' or 'engineering draughtsman' is used in its widest sense to include engineers, design engineers, engineering designers, draughtsmen and drawing-office apprentices.

The survey was conducted by means of visits to industrial concerns, educational establishments and other institutions where people representing all sides of the question were asked for their candid and confidential opinions. It was found that even within firms where apparent harmony prevailed, there were some startling misconceptions and divergences of view. At

several points these dissensions revolved about a basic principle:

### *Does engineering design require any artistic sensibility?*

Since engineering design, in the limited field covered by the survey, is responsible for such a high proportion of the goods on public display, every believer in the Modern Movement must answer: Yes. Not everyone, however, either believes in or understands the Modern Movement. Listen to the sales director of one of Britain's largest manufacturers of domestic appliances:

*"So-called contemporary design gives me the shudders. Why can't an object which is simply a box on legs look like just a box on legs, instead of a melting ice-cream on stilts?"*

A discussion on this question would be outside the scope of the survey, but hardly anyone would deny that a draughtsman who is possessed of good taste and artistic sensibility must be a more useful individual than another less fortunately endowed.

A more legitimate question arises out of this:

### *In what measure are engineering draughtsmen aesthetically gifted?*

It is sad, but evidently true, that a large majority of draughtsmen have practically no artistic accomplishment. A number of explanations have been put forward:

*"Not many draughtsmen have artistic tastes. The ideal of creating beautiful things is latent in everyone, but I am afraid it is stifled by prolonged studies in the morbid atmosphere that pervades the average technical college."* — A CHIEF ENGINEER.

*"Engineers don't seem really to enjoy the look of engineered products in the way an architect appreciates the appearance of a building. They seem to keep one archaic standard of beauty for engineering and another for everything else."* — A DESIGN ENGINEER.

*"There is a sort of tradition that engineers are too absorbed in their technology to notice what is going on in the outside world — that they are rather duffers at anything cultural — and most draughtsmen unconsciously try to live down to it."* — A CHIEF DESIGNER.

On the other hand it is also evident that given a modicum of training and a little encouragement, almost any draughtsman can quickly develop a sharp critical faculty and a modest skill at artistic presentation. Indeed it seems that a successful engineer will

be equally quick and skilful when it comes to art:

*"It seems that good engineering and good art are products of the same type of mind."* — AN APPEARANCE DESIGN ENGINEER.

Nevertheless, both appreciation and execution of the visual arts require some training and a good deal of practice, and few draughtsmen have indulged in either.

On the more particular question of how many draughtsmen can attain a sufficiently high standard of creative artistic ability to be able to undertake simultaneously the technical and appearance design of a product, there seems to be no doubt at all. The proportion is about one in forty. Such a man, however, is born, not made.

*"A draughtsman cannot become a product designer unless the instinct for aesthetics is there. It is largely a matter of environment and early training."* — AN APPEARANCE DESIGN ENGINEER.

*"You cannot teach a man to be a designer. You can only bring out any latent talent that he may possess."* — A CHIEF INSPECTOR OF EDUCATION.

In this respect the profession of engineering design is probably neither better nor worse off than any other occupation which is not considered to be directly concerned with art. Cross-sections would probably reveal similar proportions of the artistically and the inartistically inclined. Product design engineers have been giving more serious thought, particularly since the war, to the possibility that aesthetics might have some place in their work. But few post-war trainees have yet emerged from their five-year apprenticeships, and none can have achieved his ten-year seniority. Consequently it may be that engineering draughtsmanship has so far attracted rather less than the national average proportion of the artistically inclined.

### *Is there a demand for art-trained and technically qualified draughtsmen?*

Most industrial executives are quite sure that there is:

*"A man who could handle both sides of design would be worth his weight in gold."* — A TECHNICAL DIRECTOR.

*"It is worth our while to put every man from all our drawing-offices through the sieve in order to find the one here and there who will turn out to be the complete product designer."* — AN APPEARANCE DESIGN ENGINEER.

*"The industrial designer and engineer rolled into one is the ultimate ideal, of course."* — A MANAGING DIRECTOR.

*"Although we shall probably never abandon the use of consultants altogether, we hope first of all to bring forward men who can displace the outside consultant appearance designer, and eventually to reach the position where appearance design is not a separate function at all."* — AN APPEARANCE DESIGN EXECUTIVE.

However, most employers despair of finding so rare and specially qualified a man while the Ministry of Labour can show a constant deficiency of 3,200 unfilled notified vacancies for draughtsmen of almost any sort.

### *What is the supply of draughtsmen with some art experience or training?*

It would seem that not more than about 60 to 70 draughtsmen per year, out of a total intake of 8,200 per year, receive any training or even encouragement in the artistic aspects of design. Very few technical schools can find room in their over-crowded curricula for art or general cultural or liberal studies. A handful of art colleges provide courses in industrial design, with a strong art and a weak technological bias. Perhaps only one technical college and one art school actually teach appearance design to qualified or qualifying engineers.

A more impressive showing, quantitatively if not qualitatively, has been made within industry itself. Almost every large firm producing consumer goods has an executive or two who is actively preaching an enlightened design policy. In most cases there is a great deal more preaching than practising. Amongst those who are taking positive measures to improve the appearance of their products are some, like G E C, which have created their own design centres where trained industrial designers and qualified engineers work together as a team. There are others, like Metropolitan-Vickers, which run appearance design offices and appearance design committees to act as clearing houses and missionary centres for the dissemination of information, advice and propaganda on the subject. The undoubted leader in the field, however, is British Thomson-Houston in Rugby, which has incorporated appearance design courses in its training of apprentices for the company's drawing-offices and engineering design offices. The aim at B T-H is twofold. Firstly the company wishes to select students who show the required natural flair and to train them as product designers, fully qualified on both the aesthetic and technological sides. Secondly, it wishes to create interest in and sympathy for good design amongst the remainder of its engineers and draughtsmen. The results are remarkably good.

### *What are the reasons for the slow progress elsewhere?*

First and foremost is the resistance to the intrusion of new ideas and new men offered by the 'old school' of engineers and draughtsmen in senior and intermediate positions. These men are highly suspicious of the artistic influence.

*"I really don't see what art has got to do with engineering design."* — A CHIEF DRAUGHTSMAN.

*"I cannot feel that I have got anything in common with these industrial designers. They fiddle with designs which they know next to nothing about. These arty-crafty types act and talk and dress in such a way that they give one the feeling that art and design are all mixed up with unmade beds, unkempt hair, and Bohemianism of every kind."* — AN ENGINEERING EXECUTIVE.

*"I don't want streamlined casing and chromium stripes round my designs."* — A DESIGN ENGINEER.

This is almost wholly blind prejudice. Very few of those who complained had actually come into contact with industrial design. Yet even in firms where the greatest progress is being made there is still a strong conservatism; an old orientation of mind. The great 'immovable' force, however, is due largely to a dynamic rather than a static inertia. The fact that the wheels must be kept turning so fast in order to keep up with day-to-day production makes it difficult to steer the machine aside from safe, tried, tested and time-honoured practices. A second contributory factor to the lack of progress is the complacent attitude of managements. The whiplash of real competitive selling has been absent for so long that many firms have forgotten how the designer must pander to the purchaser. Where a management is itself imbued with modern ideas and is willing to put official backing behind a progressive design policy, reactionary objections melt silently away.

The technical schools have been even more troubled by inertia than the drawing-offices. Their premises, syllabuses and equipment are usually stretched to capacity (at least at the beginnings of sessions) so that there is no room for additional classes or new subjects: the Rugby College of Technology and Art is a notable exception. Nor can a student who is attending school three or four nights a week for five to seven years be blamed for declining to take on any subject which is not essential to the winning of a diploma as vital as the National Certificate. Bodies such as the London Regional Advisory Council for Higher Technological

Education think that it would be unwise to offer industrial design courses either as lesser alternatives to the National Certificates, or as second prizes to candidates who fail to make the grade. Even where some means are found for incorporating an art training in a course, the practical suggestion that the technical school student could be sent to an art school for special instruction meets with little approval from technical school or student. The art schools themselves are usually less overcrowded, and some are willing to take in technical school students or even to organise full engineering courses with greater or lesser art bias. Engineers and engineering students, however, are very reluctant to enter an art school for fear of what they might see, or whom they might meet.

The facilities for the necessary type of industrial design course exist in quite a number of art colleges, but there is so little active support from industry that the only two in which full-time classes are actually in progress are the London Central School of Arts and Crafts and the Birmingham College of Art and Crafts. Less difficulty surrounds the problem of providing classes for draughtsmen who are already qualified on the technical side. When suitably encouraged by their employers, draughtsmen will attend evening courses on aesthetics for engineers such as those which have been provided at the Salford Royal Technical College, the Manchester College of Art, and the Rugby College of Technology and Art. The only school where qualified draughtsmen are known to attend the full-time courses on industrial design is the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London.

### *What can be done to improve the position?*

This survey does not pretend to have been exhaustive; ten times as much information was discovered than can appear within these pages, and ten times more was not seen at all. But some conclusions can be drawn with confidence.

Firstly, only the slowest progress can be expected without active and outspoken support by managements for the concept of applying a trained eye and practised hand to the appearance factor in engineering design. This attitude must take the form of internal directives that will make 'old school' engineers tolerant and the younger generation enthusiastic about industrial design. It must also include an active interest in the operation of local technical and art schools. When industrial representatives are on boards of governors, amongst the part-time instructors, and behind student apprentices, the courses of instruction can be shaped to meet any need. It is useless for employers to complain, as many of them do, that

schools are old-fashioned in their methods, out of touch with their needs, or inadequately equipped, without making some effort to point out what is in fact required and then compelling prospective or apprenticed trainees to enrol at the school.

Secondly, educational authorities must not adopt a self-satisfied attitude when they have provided a workshop full of lathes and a classroom full of drawing-boards. No industrialist is really impressed by a display of capital equipment which could never, in any case, be compared with the facilities of his own factories. It is the 'shoestring' budgets available for consumable small tools and scanty supplies of raw materials which sap the confidence of students and prospective employers. Schools of design for the engineering industries must get down to work on genuine research and real prototype production, even if it means the abandonment of principles of non-commercialism in order to make the work pay for itself. Companies can be persuaded to place contracts for design research at fairly generous prices, to make grants for any necessary special capital equipment, and to allow their own men to work at the school on these projects as a form of post-graduate study, provided that they know that the time and energy of numerous staff and students are to be devoted to their rapid conclusion.

Thirdly, it seems reasonable to expect the professional engineering institutions to reconsider their attitudes towards industrial design, and to co-operate with industry and the schools in the establishment of suitable diplomas such as a new National Certificate or a revised National Diploma in Design. It is sometimes not realised that the professional institutions are not in the same position as the equivalent societies in law, medicine and architecture, where men must belong or refrain from practising. The only reason why many engineers maintain their memberships of the engineering institutions is that a majority of employers demand this as a proof of a certain standard of proficiency. If employers were to recognise other certificates which did not involve membership and therefore the need to pay annual subscriptions indefinitely, then the professional institutions would be amongst the first to suffer.

However, the consciousness that engineering is a part of our general culture, and that other cultural influences must have their effects on engineering, is beginning to make itself felt. In another five years the first generations of art-trained draughtsmen will be attaining senior positions. It would be a pity if it were left to competition from overseas to force sales directors to take the initiative outside the design office.



# REVIEW OF CURRENT DESIGN

The items shown have recently been accepted for inclusion in 'Design Review', the illustrated record of current British products, to be seen at the London headquarters of the Council of Industrial Design.

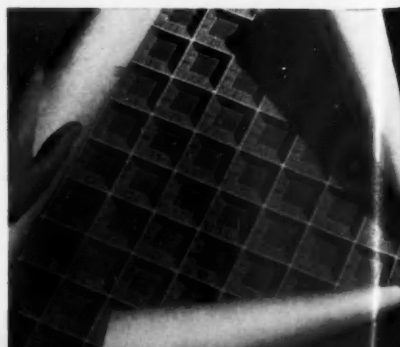


ABOVE The surfaces of this furniture are covered in plasticised fabric made by Ryjack Ltd. It claims the qualities of resistance to high temperatures, food stains and abrasions as laminated plastics, but in addition is easy to the touch and less noisy when pots are put down on. DESIGNER Frank Guille. MAKER Kandya Ltd.

RIGHT This machine printed wallpaper has a rare freshness in the 'accidental' quality of the plant forms. It was achieved by arranging actual pressed leaves on paper from which a photo-print was made, the final design being based on this print. MAKER Wall Paper Manufacturers Ltd.



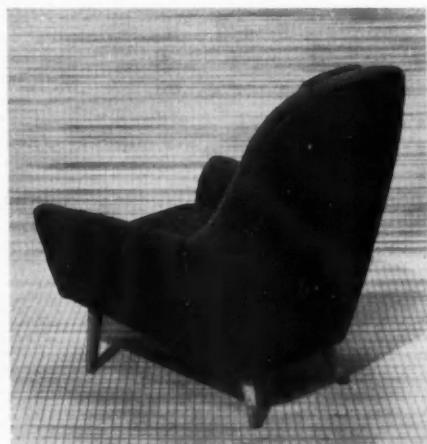
RIGHT The broken lines of the simple interlocking squares successfully destroy the harshness that might otherwise result from this type of geometrical pattern. But there is a long way to go before modern carpet designs rival the boldness and splendour of the greatest examples from the past. MAKER T. F. Firth & Sons Ltd.







ABOVE This tea service is made according to Continental porcelain practice, which produces a thin, hard glaze and vitrified body. The two-colour finishes available are dark grey and red, black and white or dark and light blue. DESIGNER William Gordon. MAKER The Walton Pottery Co Ltd.



ABOVE A new addition to the company's upholstery range, this chair was designed to give an unusual degree of comfort in a small-looking lightweight suite. The shape, which is satisfying from all angles, has been largely achieved by the use of tension springs in the back. DESIGNER Ward & Austin. MAKER Buoyant Upholstery Ltd.



ABOVE The manufacturer originally responsible for the use of modern designs on bed-ticking has now introduced a new idea called the 'Matchmaker'. This is a bed headboard with an easily removed panel over which a fabric of the customer's own choice (to match perhaps bedcover or curtains) can be fixed. MAKER Horatio Myer & Co Ltd.



ABOVE The function of two taps is combined in one in this unusual type of mixer which has a well integrated shape comfortable to handle and easy to clean. A quarter turn provides cold water, a half turn mixes hot and cold and a full turn gives hot water. DESIGNER J. W. Sheardown. MAKER Edward Johns & Co Ltd.



ABOVE The neat appearance of the single mixer tap, top, can be seen on this vitreous china basin. The overflow slot is concealed in the front of the basin. MAKER Edward Johns & Co Ltd.

BELOW Subtle curves along the sides of the top relieve the otherwise severe lines of this coffee table. It has a 'Formica' top and a mahogany framework. MAKER Loughborough Cabinet Manufacturing Co Ltd.



LEFT It is several years since the excellent shapes of this dinner service were originally designed and put on the market. The pattern, however, is well suited to the coupe shape of the plate and dish, though its character appears to owe much to the oak leaf designs originally used before the war. DESIGNER The late John Adams (shapes), A. B. Read (pattern). MAKER Carter, Stabler & Adams Ltd.

LEFT Machine printed wallpaper with a geometric design giving a three-dimensional coffered effect. MAKER Wall Paper Manufacturers Ltd.

# Presenting a new fibre

Richard Rhodes

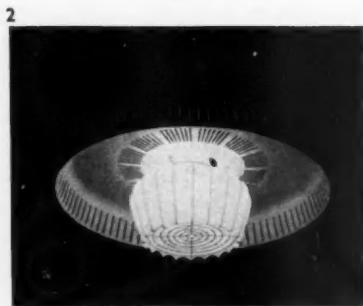
SPEND 23 MILLION POUNDS IN ENGLAND, 20 million dollars in Canada, and you may find you have had the luck to bring out a new synthetic fibre. But to have reached this stage and to have produced a substance like 'Terylene', which, among its multitudinous uses, is claimed to be "the answer to all corsetry", is not enough. You have to sell it to the trade and to the public. Two permanent showrooms, exhibitions up and down the country and abroad, and an individual 'house style' for publication, are the methods adopted by ICI to sell the new discovery.

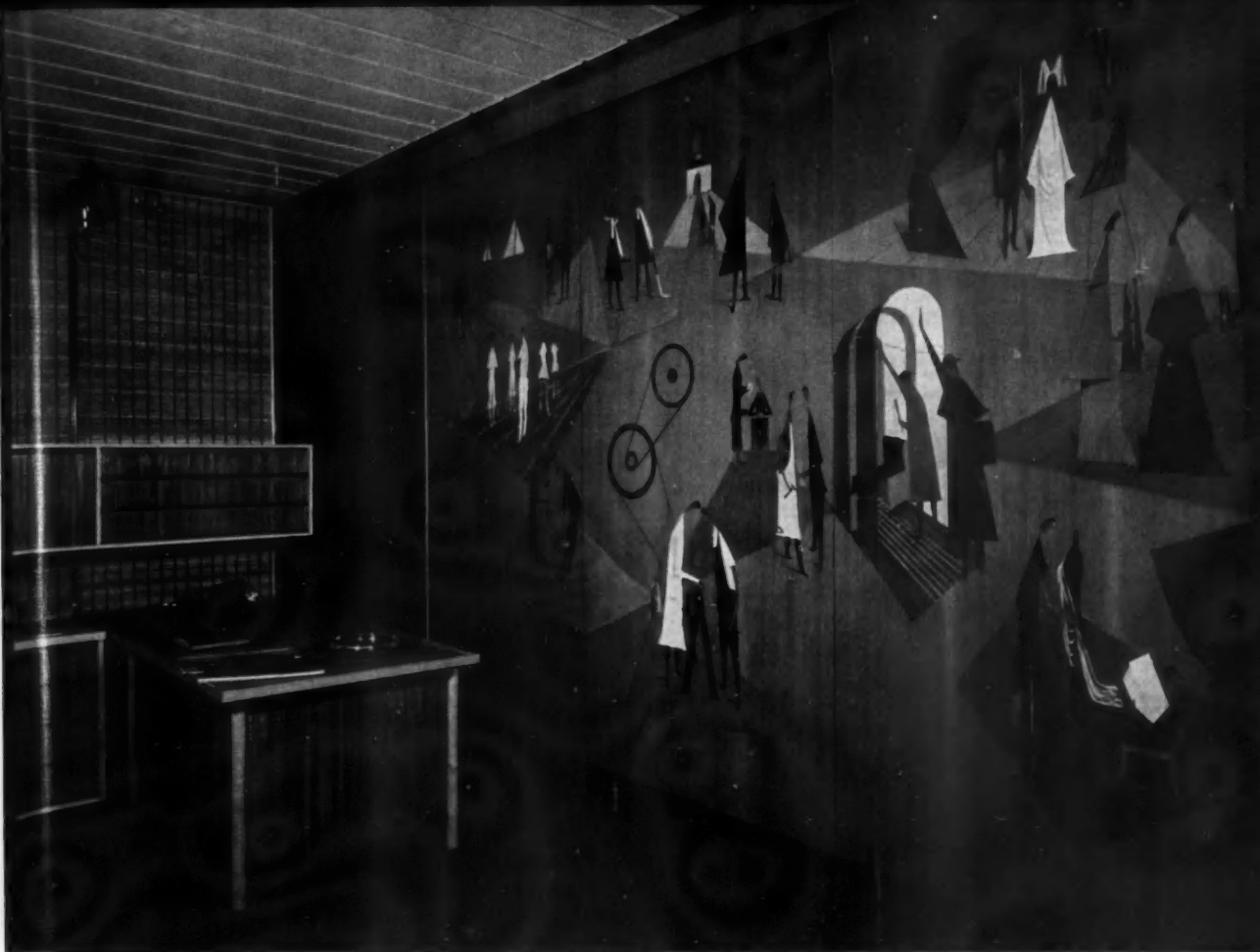
The showroom of the ICI 'Terylene' Council headquarters in Harrogate is designed to allow for a wide variety of displays, and contains an admirable mural, 3, by Warner Cooke showing the numerous uses of 'Terylene'. Although highly stylised, the 'pin-head' figures have been commended even by those who think they only like 'representational' painting; the artist was clearly given a free hand to work as he wished. In so doing, he has elevated propaganda to a far higher level than it usually attains, and industry here reveals itself as a patron of the same sort as, for example, the Church in the middle



1 ICI 'Terylene' Council headquarters at Harrogate. The architect for the building was A. V. Montague, and the general contractors were George Wimpey & Co Ltd. The execution of Hulme Chadwick's design for the showroom was entrusted to David Esdaile & Co Ltd.

2 Light fitting of spun metal designed by Hulme Chadwick.





3

3 Warner Cooke's mural showing the uses of the new synthetic fibre.

ages. But whereas the medieval painter depicted saints, his modern counterpart, in the more material modern world, shows the uses of synthetic fibre.

A less enduring demonstration of this fibre's virtues is found in the big display panel, 1, which is divided into several sections, and is draped with ropes and fishing-nets. The construction in the foreground is of 'Terylene' cord entwining a central column - an effect reminiscent of the 'linear constructions' of Naum Gabo. Light fittings of spun metal, with a 'Chrysaline' inner shade, 2, are suspended from the ceiling which is of stove-enamelled metal units. These units can be removed and rearranged, thus allowing the pendant light fittings to be placed in fresh positions. The carpet is an 'Ardil'-wool mixture, and the furniture next to the mural is of solid sycamore with an Indian almond wood veneer.

In Park Lane, London, I C I also has a 'Terylene' showroom, but its scope is more limited since it was



4

4 Chair designed by Hulme Chadwick for the Harrogate showroom.



5

5 The recent exhibition at Hutchinson House might equally well have been held in a building devoid of ornament, for the designer's intention was to suppress background detail. In this he was successful, so that dresses and female underwear flounced airily above the daffodils, and 'Terylene' was subjected to no unwelcome competition from Lord Derby's ceilings. The designer was Hulme Chadwick and the general contractors The City Display Organisation.

6



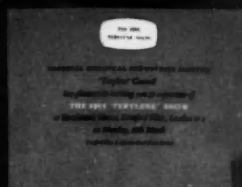
converted from offices, and is intended only for English and foreign trade buyers in the London area. For instance, a straw pin-up board displaying light wool fabrics performs the same function as the larger panel in the Harrogate showroom. Grey ash veneer is used throughout for the woodwork, and the lighting for the displays is tungsten mixed with fluorescent. The carpet was made by Steele's of Banbury, and the chairs are by Ernest Race Ltd. Hulme Chadwick designed both showrooms and was responsible for the furniture in the Harrogate display.

The recent exhibition of 'Terylene' at Hutchinson House, also designed by Hulme Chadwick, was "an illustrated buyers' guide" intended for the trade. Advertisement here took a different form, and owing to the large number of manufacturers represented, about 130, something of the spaciousness to be found in the showrooms was inevitably lost. The designer's aim was to highlight the textiles so that they did not clash with the ornate character of the background. Most of the fabrics on view were designed to be worn, but there were also some fine examples of printed furnishing fabrics by Humphrey Spender, RCA students, and others.

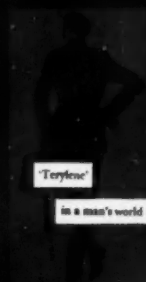
Dr Alexander Fleck, Chairman of the Board of Directors, in his address which opened the exhibition, spoke of the show as a "coming-out party" for 'Terylene'. For the visitor it was amusing to walk through the gilded rooms of Hutchinson House, so often tightly packed with the flowers of English maidenhood, and to find these rooms equally tightly packed with fabrics, from which in future seasons debutantes will perhaps derive their dresses. Before this happens, however, there is still the business of convincing the garment manufacturers and the public that 'Terylene' makes suitable garments for everyday use. There are, for instance, problems in tailoring and making up, and in dry cleaning, and even treatment during washing at home is often different from that of conventional clothing. These problems, and many others which are inevitable when developing an entirely new textile fibre, are being solved by ICI scientists, and so it seems that the last million pounds for research has not yet been spent.

6 and 7 ICI's 'Terylene' publications are even more attractive when seen together, in their various colours, than when examined individually. The 'house style' shows a restraint which is as free from cheap 'puffing' as advertising matter can be.

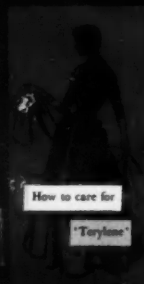
Design: Number 78



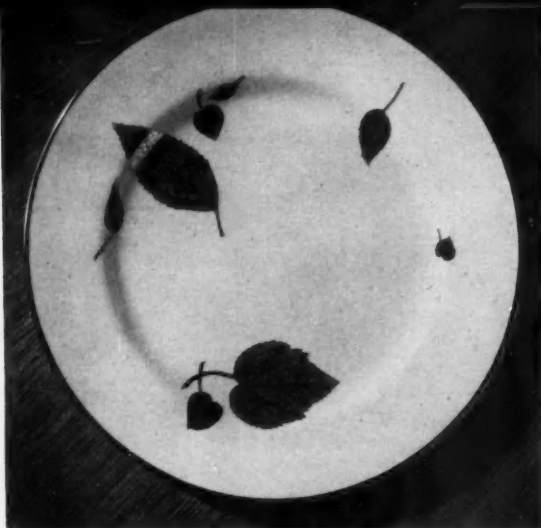
'Terylene'  
in Industry



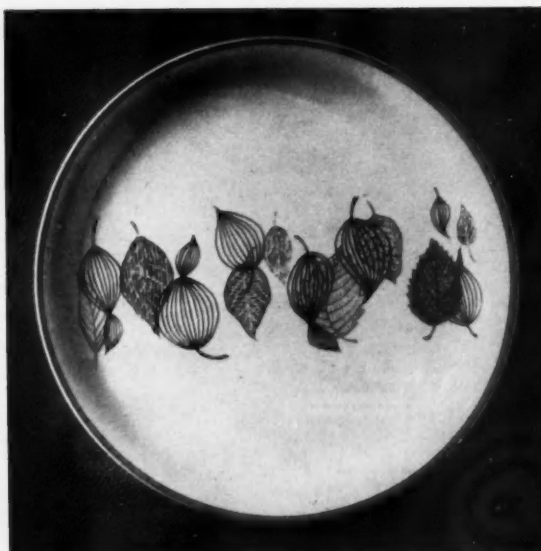
buyers guide



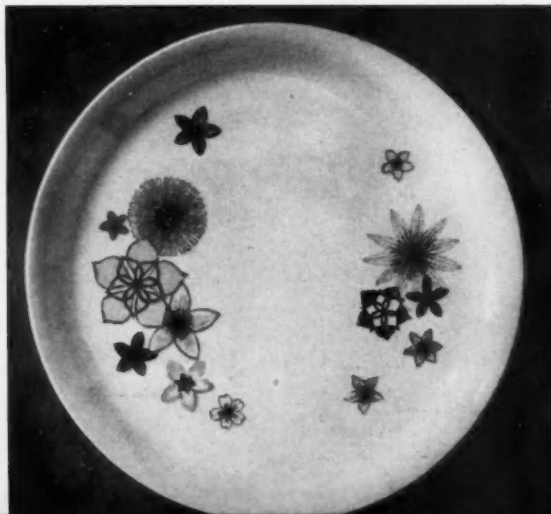




ABOVE LEAF SKELETONS Colin Haxby's intricate design in black and three golds, silk screen-printed on china.



ABOVE FOREST ROW A thoroughly modern interpretation of a leaf pattern by Kenneth Clark, in red, black and a soft mauve on coupe-shaped earthenware. The band has been carefully related to the rest of the design, but the effect might be spoiled if plates are laid haphazard.



## Transfer and pottery

THERE IS A GENERAL IMPRESSION of liveliness and vigour in the designs which Johnson, Matthey and Co Ltd has recently been showing at Burslem. Many of the more successful patterns are by Colin Haxby, who was recommended to the firm from the Council's Record of Designers, but there are also several good designs by newcomers. Johnson, Matthey had difficulty in obtaining suitable chinaware from the manufacturers – some even had to be brought over from Germany; as a result the number of shapes on which these patterns could be printed was very limited. Normally a design is first applied to a cup, a saucer, a tea-plate, and bread and butter plate; if it can be placed on these satisfactorily it is considered acceptable for the other shapes. A few of the designs shown do not stand up to this test, and others never quite agree with the shapes to which they have been allotted.

The most interesting development is the application of the screen-printed transfer to fine china. This process which makes a solid but controlled deposit seems well suited to gold work, marrying most satisfactorily with the china. Colin Haxby's 'Leaf Skeletons', which appears to derive from the rubbing or pressing of a natural leaf, is particularly skilful. Leaves of varying sizes have been scattered across the surface, and drawn in fine black lines and three different golds, yellow, green and white. This design looks its best disposed along the gradual curve of a small tea-bowl. As the pattern is enlarged to cover the wider plates it becomes

LEFT WATER FLOWERS A floral design by Colin Haxby whose imagination seems to have drawn on science to produce a pattern of petal structure. The predominant colours are greens, with tan and yellow.

RIGHT LIME SEEDS A promising design for earthenware by Kenneth Clark, in which maroon, green and brown are used to produce an effect of shading.

dilated and so loses some of its unity. The dissipation of a design as it is applied to bigger pieces is a problem which often recurred in the exhibition.

The danger of taking good modern designs and tricking them out with 'contemporary' touches was clearly shown in a second version of 'Leaf Skeletons', where the delicate tracery of this pattern is overlaid with a series of broad hand-painted candy stripes in pastel pink. It is difficult to believe that both come from the same stable.

The collection, however, has plenty of invention and imagination, although the majority of the designs revolve round a botanical theme. Yet within these bounds there is great variety, from the sensitive lifting of an early seventeenth-century 'Persian Tree' pattern to a floral version of a Festival crystal design, 'Water Flowers', or a colourful dichotomy of tropical fruits called 'Barbados'. Judging by results pottery designers are happier among leaves and flowers than borrowed textiles. J.N.W.



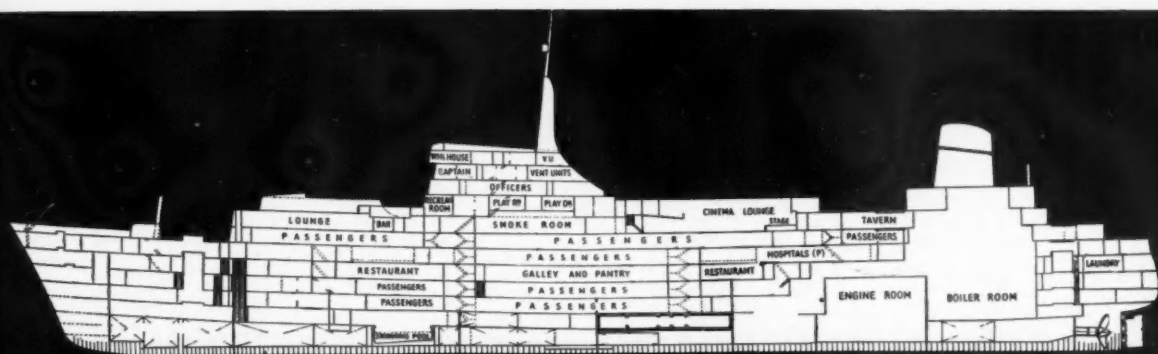
# Towards

## A MODERN LINER

Michael Farr

**T**HE ENGINES ARE AFT. This simple statement is the key to the originality of the new Shaw Savill passenger liner SS 'Southern Cross'. Like a tanker the liner's propelling machinery and funnel are placed aft of the main structure so giving an unusually long uninterrupted flow of deck space at all levels. The innovation dissolved a host of conventional difficulties and created a set of new ones, some of

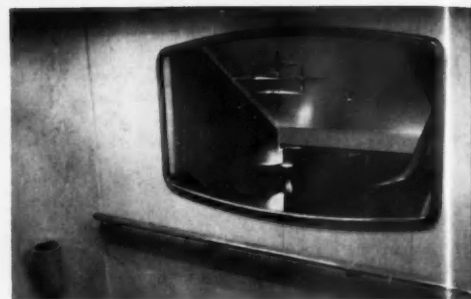






View of the forward restaurant showing the high quality of materials and refined design which characterise the best work in the ship. The cold buffet table is of walnut, ash and sycamore with a 'Perstorp' plastic veneered top. Designed and made by Heaton Tabb & Co Ltd.

Typical group to be found on the staircases showing the high standard of design for many details on board.



along the side behind a neo-Edwardian balustrade are comfortable but characterless in a colour scheme which bears no relation to the attractive Sanderson window curtains behind. These in turn are decked with a fussy pelmet of unrelated colouring. The floor surrounding the main dance area has been covered with 'Korkoid', a versatile plastic material which here has been coloured to resemble the 'green marble' of a typical bathroom floor. On the other hand there are elegant stacking chairs and light, occasional tables and, perhaps the most exciting design feature in the ship, a full length middle stage curtain of white velour painted with a black, gold and crimson design by Doris Zinkeisen. This should have been the key-note for the colour scheme in this area.

The rest of the public rooms were designed and executed by Heaton Tabb and the best of them is the library, a small area on the starboard side with direct views to the sea. White sycamore bookcases and light

pink panelling in willow blend well with a grey-white carpet and chairs in ivory hide. With these elements the library can be expected to take on a well controlled vitality when the inevitably colourful books are in place. Again it is salutary to remember what plushy, stuffy places ships' libraries are apt to be.

### Space out of control

The forward lounge, largest of the public rooms extending to the full beam of the ship, got a little out of hand. The convenience of a very large space for use and service is great; the difficulty of keeping it under control is greater. The monotony of this lounge is the core of my criticism for within a deck height of necessity far too low for an area so big, no attempt has been made to stop the eye from wandering aimlessly from one heap of furniture to another, each one identically dominated by dull chintz loose covers. The



Smoke room with concentric, indirectly lit ceiling giving a welcome sense of height. Straightforward furniture is used, but the area suffers from the pervading sombre tones in the upholstery and repetitive wall panels of silver-grey elm.



Irregular plan and curving glass wall combine to make the library appear large and uncluttered. Colour comes from the curtains and grey carpet contrasting with white sycamore and pink willow fittings and paneling. Although restrained, this design for a single area is the best in the ship.



beginnings of a focal point are in the centre where, within an ellipse of slender columns, stand two nicely detailed floodlight bowls from which the central ceiling is indirectly lit. But something more could have been done to define several areas of the lounge and provide each with a human scale. Perhaps lightweight and movable partitions could have been erected so that, instead of gaining variety expensively by importing different designs of furniture, the same basically good pieces, with more imaginative covers, could be contained, to be seen only in small groups. The lounge, which occupies an area of about 60 ft by 70 ft, but is only 10 ft high, cannot successfully be furnished with conventional arrangements.

The point has been appreciated elsewhere by Heaton Tabb's for the forward restaurant, an even larger area, employs slender glass screens to form intimate dining corners. The chairs here are among the best to be seen on any ship, and good use has been made of four

leather upholstery coverings, ivory, beige, green and red. The restaurant is deep in the ship with no natural daylight, but to make up for this the designers have attempted to suggest the open air by cutting apertures for lighted panels on the sides. The tawdry green metal foliage which climbs about in these strikes the only false note in the room.

Up on the decks there is abundant space; the effect of having the funnel aft can be seen at once. Stretching back from the bridge superstructure is a generous games deck that calls for a better, perhaps glass, wind-break around the edge than the present flapping canvas sheets. There is a swimming pool flanked by two dressing rooms on the fore part of the sun deck; a larger but covered pool is provided on the lowest deck. The promenade deck encircles the ship and with this and other areas it is clear that the 'Southern Cross' offers an unusual amount of open deck space for a ship of her size plying in the tropics. The

29

Boldly painted stage curtain by Doris Zinkeisen tends to monopolise attention, and leave the rest of this cinema area indefinite in design.

Largest public room in the ship, the forward lounge, has a height of only 10 ft. In this view the centre is shown with the beginnings of a focal point in the two floodlight bowls. But there is not sufficient emphasis on any one part of the room to prevent the eye getting lost in a maze of furnished groups. Photograph, far right, indicates that a more deliberate use of slender screens could have defined the area into several manageable groups.



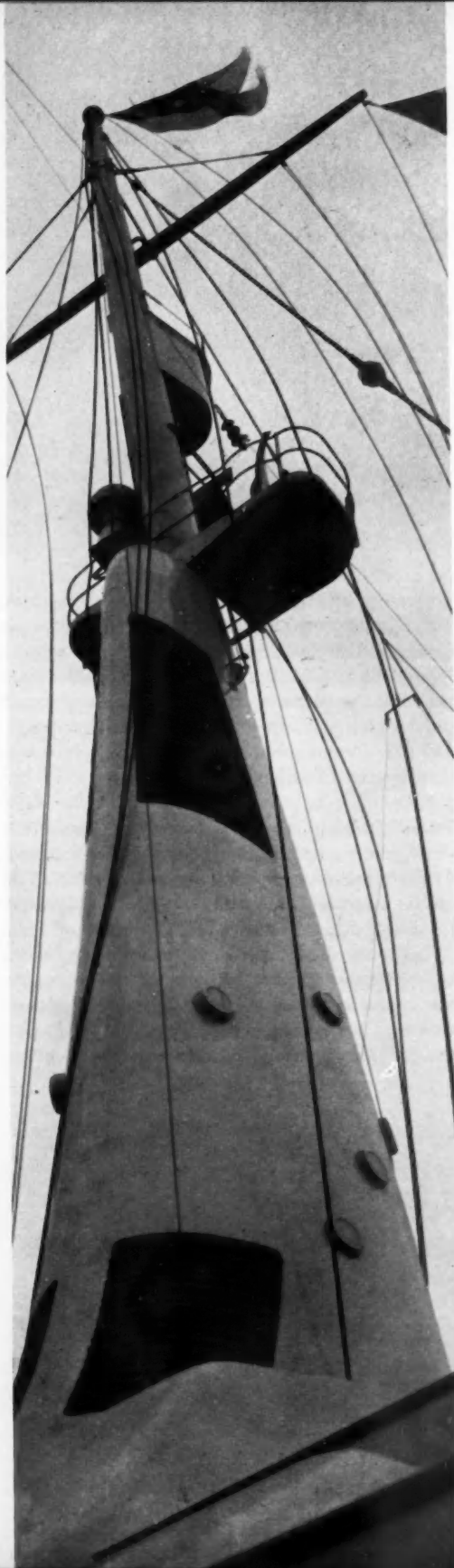
absence of the conventional air scoops is the clue to an important feature. Both restaurants, the cinema and several smaller rooms are air conditioned as well as every passenger cabin. It is claimed that the 'Southern Cross' is the most extensively air conditioned ship in service in the tropics.

The 405 cabins, though all of one class, naturally vary in size and comfort. They range from the relatively large single and double cabins with either bath or shower on the promenade deck, to the four- or six-berth spaces with separate communal showers on B deck. In design they are serviceable and straightforward with finely detailed wooden fittings, Shanks sanitary ware and lavish areas faced with 'Formica'. This plastic panelling is repeated in the lavatories and showers and along the alleyways where, in a light blue pattern, it contrasts well with the recurring mahogany doors. Trouble has been taken to shield the inevitable ducting in cabin ceilings; the portholes are flanked with gay printed fabrics.

Many small details in the ship are especially notable: a few of them could be improved. Amongst those which I thought particularly good are the cigarette ash containers and the mirrors mounted in the staircases; the area identification boards and the directional lettering generally; the lever handles in satin chrome on many storage cupboards; the handrails and, for a ship, the surprisingly unfussy balustrades to staircases. Poor details include most of the china, cutlery and table silver,\* litter baskets in the cinema (much better ones are in use elsewhere) and, above all, the really nasty pearl-white plastic lampshades in every alleyway and cabin.

What is the moral in all this? It seems to me to be the same as in the Greek liner 'Olympia' (DESIGN February 1954 pages 13-21); only there is a difference in degree. Parts of the 'Olympia' are downright vulgar, the outcome of uncontrolled exuberance. Here nothing is vulgar and nothing shows exuberance, controlled or otherwise. But the 'Southern Cross', like the 'Olympia', suffers because no single enlightened designer had been invited to direct the work. The Orient Line solve this problem every time without a hint of staleness in the work turned out; Shaw Savill, an obviously farsighted, adventurous company to have embarked on a vessel as revolutionary as the 'Southern Cross', would have immeasurably improved the design of its ship by using the same method to secure a co-ordinated result.

\* The following list indicates the scale of the orders which are placed for a passenger liner. For 1,160 passengers the 'Southern Cross' requires: 21,000 plates, 12,000 cups and saucers, 21,000 glasses, 3,500 knives, 2,400 forks, 5,000 spoons, 250 teapots, 150 coffee pots, 350 jugs, 9,500 mattress and bolster covers, etc.



# FURNITURE *survey*

## *Bedroom furniture*

A. GARDNER-MEDWIN

The following groups  
of furniture are included  
in the survey

Fully upholstered chairs . MARCH  
Dining tables and chairs . APRIL  
Occasional chairs . . . MAY  
All-purpose chairs . . . JULY  
Storage units . . . AUGUST  
Occasional furniture . SEPTEMBER  
Outdoor furniture . . . OCTOBER  
Kitchen furniture . . . NOVEMBER

*One of a series of articles on modern furniture selected from 'Design Review', the illustrated record of current British products now to be seen at the London headquarters of the Council of Industrial Design.*

SOME RETAIL FURNITURE SALESMEN say that the living room is considered the first and most important problem to be tackled by young couples when they are furnishing a home. This is something of an innovation since previously it was always the bedroom that came first and on which the most money was spent. But, whether or not the spending habits of newlyweds are changing, there is no doubt that



*The padded panels of this fitted divan headboard slide aside to give access to cupboards, and in the lower part of the unit there is useful storage space for luggage or winter blankets. MAKER E. Gomme Ltd.*

the bedroom still constitutes a major problem and absorbs a considerable amount of the budget allotted for furnishing.

From the designer's point of view there is perhaps rather less scope for originality in bedroom furniture than with other types which may account for the lack of variety in the examples included in 'Design Review'. To evolve something new for a large and still necessary piece such as the wardrobe is not easy, and generally the most successful solutions rely on good proportions, simple detail and pleasant veneers, thus making the unit as unobtrusive as possible.

The emphasis in this article, however, is on beds and dressing tables. Dressing tables are usually the most difficult pieces to design, since the demand is for plenty of storage accommodation coupled with a kneehole which to some extent determines the shape. The more elegant table with a single line of shallow drawers – often so attractive in appearance – appeals only to a limited market.

The present fashion for eccentrically shaped mirrors, which often bear no relation in form to the table, is unfortunate. On the other hand, it is gratifying to find more manufacturers framing the mirror in wood as this helps to give a unity of appearance. A frameless mirror gives the impression of being detached and looks unnecessarily utilitarian. The choice and placing of handles deserve special attention in bedroom suites, for many more are required than on most other types of furniture. If they are of shoddy material or are badly positioned the effect can be disastrous on the design as a whole.

Recent experiments have shown that there is still room for new thought on the design of beds. The traditional type of bed with a fairly high footboard has almost disappeared. The divan, with a headboard only, was introduced during the 'thirties and its popularity has been largely due to the fact that it takes up less space and is less dominant in the room. Now, however, the older type of design seems to be staging a comeback. A particularly pleasing example, made by Kandy Ltd, is shown on page 34.

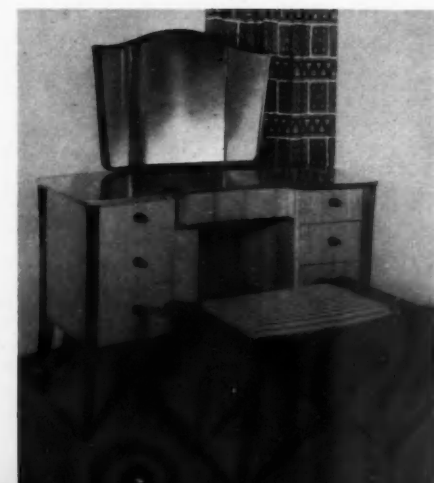
*The shaping of the table front and mirror blends happily in this mahogany and French walnut veneered dressing table. Legs and handles have been carefully related.*  
DESIGNER Shirley Slater. MAKER Gimson & Slater Ltd.



*A roomy dressing table with clear lines and well selected walnut veneers. One drawer is specially fitted to take bottles. The mirror has been framed with a shaped moulding. DESIGNER W. H. Russell. MAKER Gordon Russell Ltd.*



*A variation of the pedestal dressing table. The drawers are detached from the top, and the use of contrasting woods (sapele mahogany and rosewood) has also increased the feeling of lightness, so often missing in this style of dressing table. DESIGNER Berick Design Group. MAKER Beresford & Hicks.*





*This dressing table has good lines accentuated by the inset of ebonised mahogany. DESIGNER Ward and Austin. MAKER Loughborough Cabinet Manufacturing Co Ltd.*



*Pedestal dressing tables, although capacious, often look clumsy. This has been avoided here by breaking up the drawer fronts with contrasting woods and using pleasant brass handles. The detailing of the carcass edge has also helped to give a lighter touch. There is a fall front in the centre section for storing bottles and so on: the wood panel at the top and bottom of the mirrors joins them to the main carcass. DESIGNER Ian Henderson Studio. MAKER Ian Henderson Ltd.*



*Another example of the popular pedestal dressing table. Plate glass is used as a shelf between the two drawer units. There is accommodation for bottles in the centre. DESIGNER R. Heritage. MAKER G. W. Evans Ltd.*

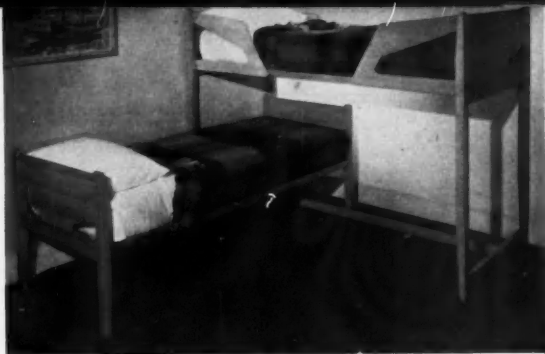


*Made of solid oak and veneered plywood, this suite is very inexpensive. The treatment of the mirror on the wardrobe is unusual and the design as a whole is clean and tidy. DESIGNER John Reid and Sylvia Reid. MAKER The Stag Cabinet Co Ltd.*

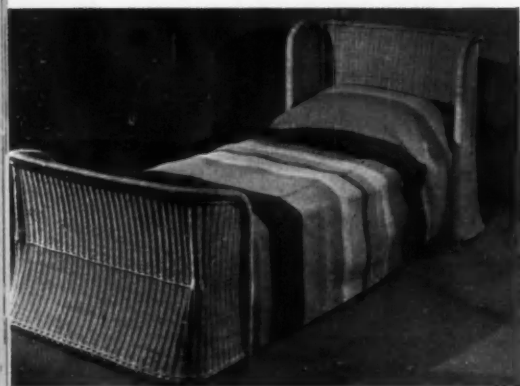


*Eucalyptus and yew tree are used in this unusual bedroom suite. Bringing the chests of drawers well up from the floor has practical advantages, and when done well, this gives a lightness of appearance to the furniture. The drawer linings are moulded. DESIGNER Shirley Slater. MAKER Gimson & Slater Ltd for Heal & Son Ltd.*





An idea which was first shown at the South Bank exhibition. Bunk beds have not been very popular in this country, but the idea of having two separate beds has many advantages. The lower bed also fits lengthwise under the high bed. DESIGNER Ewart Myer. MAKER Horatio Myer and Co Ltd.



Cane is an unusual material for a bed in this country, but more common in France. It is a decorative substance which mixes well with wood pieces. This design is rather heavy, but when used imaginatively cane has many possibilities. MAKER Heal & Son Ltd.



The idea of this extending bed, which could be used in the nursery, was also first demonstrated in the South Bank exhibition. The bed is supposed to grow with the child. This example would also be useful for the bed-sitting room; as seen in the inset, it makes an attractive sofa when closed. MAKER H. & A. G. Alexander & Co Ltd.

A bed which looks agreeably light. The pleasant pattern of the V-shaped uprights, the curved top rail and shaped foot rail are notable features. DESIGNER Paul Bridson. MAKER Kandya Ltd.

The shape of head-boards - seen as they are against a wall - has to be carefully considered. This is a good example of the modern divan bed: the woods used are walnut veneer and beech. DESIGNER Ward and Austin. MAKER A. F. Buckingham Ltd.



# DESIGN

## and the

# PRO

Lex Hornsby

*At a recent meeting of the Design and Industries Association, Lex Hornsby, Public Relations Officer, Ministry of Labour, suggested ways in which he and his colleagues in industry could improve design standards.*

WHAT CAN BE DONE through public relations techniques to help the designer? I want to suggest what seem to be four essentials of a campaign addressed to the purchaser.

The first and the most important thing is to try to persuade a typical member of the public, call him Mr Bloggs, to select for himself. We should tell him that to be interested in his own home is much more important than merely being a student of what other people are doing. Let him see that the appreciation of something in his own home, which he had selected with thought, is better than a disinterested tolerance of something which has been selected for him. This seems to be the first essential - to make people think.

Clearly that is not enough. Mr Bloggs must be given some standards. Education in appreciation is essential - education in both sensuous and intellectual perceptivity - and I think it should be possible to do this because I believe that the feeling for good design is inherent in the majority of human beings.

It should be possible to bring our friend to the point at which he will recognise good design; will recognise that it shows sincerity on the part of the designer and results from a conviction on his part which is transmitted to those who see the product. I believe it is necessary to state these characteristics time and time again because, as Leonardo da Vinci said: "Knowledge of a thing engenders

love of it, and the more exact the knowledge, the more fervent the love."

### Simple terms

The third essential is that having decided what we want to say to the Bloggs family, we should be neither didactic in tone nor unintelligible in the idiom we use. The Design and Industries Association has done much to explain in simple terms the principles of good design, but there is an ever-increasing tendency for the expert in any field today to put barriers round himself, and these barriers are made the more impenetrable by the critics, and particularly the art critics, who use a jargon which is entirely unintelligible to the average person. We could talk to Mr Bloggs in terms of "unity with no unresolved duality", about the machine aesthetic, about proportion and scale and character. But he would not be very much the wiser.

I believe it is possible to state these characteristics in quite a simple language. We could tell him that the article he buys must look as though it is all one thing and not a lot of bits put together; that he should not choose things with ornament added simply to fill a blank space - the ornament must have relation to the shape or purpose of the article. We could tell him that the shape should please him and trust his innate feeling for proportion. We could tell him that the article should look the right size for its job and for the place where it is to be used. We could tell him finally that it must be what it is and not appear to be something different.

### Beauty from delight

Finally I would try to make the whole subject exciting and exhilarating - as it can be. It was Sir Lawrence Weaver who said: "Beauty is the outcome of delight", and our aim should be to help people to look around them and find that delight in fine things, and acquire an intolerance of things which are ugly.

It is easy to say that these should

be the four criteria of a public relations policy on the subject, and it would be simple to put together a campaign embracing all the various vehicles of communication at a considerable cost to someone. But much good can come from little money.

Would it not be possible to interest the trade union movement in this subject? It is true that one of the greatest dangers to the worker in this machine age is the boredom which comes from repetitive work. How much more destructive of the spirit of a man must be the knowledge that he is churning out junk from day to day, from week to week? Can we not envisage the time when a worker would deliberately choose to work, other things being equal, for the firm in whose products he can take an intelligent pride? Could not some trade union leaders be invited to a discussion to seek ways of interesting their members?

### Design hallmark

Secondly, there may be difficulties in giving any kind of label or mark to be awarded to products which have reached a proper standard, although this is now being tried in the United States. But we have got something very close to that in the selection of products for 'Design Review'. Manufacturers are permitted to advertise the fact that their goods have been so selected. Would it not be possible to encourage the manufacturer himself to publicise the selection of his wares at the point of sale?

Finally, should there not be some films on this subject? Of all the media available, the film and, of course, the television film are surely ideal. We are dealing with shapes, colour, texture; on film we can not only show these but we can demonstrate and contrast. Would it be possible to persuade some responsible firms in industry today to sponsor such a series, for surely it must be to the advantage of such firms, who have invested in designers and the plant to produce worthwhile products, to cultivate public interest in good design?

# The Cotton Board reports on Australia

**D. Johnston**

OF ALL COTTON FABRICS imported by Australia, half are sent from Lancashire. The requirements of the Australian market vary from dress materials to beachwear, handkerchiefs to towels, and shirtings to furnishing fabrics. Today Australia is actually and potentially Great Britain's largest oversea market for cotton cloth, and last year bought nearly £16 million worth of Lancashire fabric. In 1951, the total was £26 million, and though that was a boom year, the subsequent decline illustrates a tendency for the world's export trade in textiles to diminish. It is becoming increasingly important therefore that we in this country should do all we can to retain our considerable share in these markets against intense competition.

That the industry is alive to these conditions was clearly and expertly demonstrated in a recent exhibition 'Cotton in Australia' at the Cotton Board Colour, Design and Style Centre in Manchester. The foresight of the Cotton Board in sending a young man - Donald Tomlinson, Director of the Centre - to study at first hand Australian market conditions, should be an example to other industries. The exhibition, staged with all the skill and attention to display which those who have seen previous Cotton Board exhibitions have learnt to expect, was in fact his report. Designed by Robert and Roger Nicholson, it was divided into

two parts. The first half told the story of a sales promotion campaign organised throughout Australia last summer, while the second showed Lancashire what her competitors are selling to drive home the lesson that in Australia it is design that sells cotton.

Lancashire's competitors form three neat groups. Japan and India sell to Australia on the score of price. Their goods are cheaper than the Western countries



## JAPANESE DRESS MATERIALS

ABOVE The Australian outlook has much in common with that of the U S A. Our Japanese competitors have realised this and sell in Sydney their dress fabrics printed, by arrangement, with American designs.

## AUSTRALIAN FURNISHING FABRICS

LEFT Turtles, boomerangs and an aboriginal dance are motives with a local flavour. These designs are in the 'Pacific idiom' characteristic of many new Australian productions.



can ever hope to produce because of extremely low labour costs. There is little original design in these goods though one group of fabrics from Japan had interesting printed designs. Those, however, have been copied by arrangement from American originals.

Lancashire's second competitor is the Australian home producer. Australian cotton manufacture is not of a particularly high standard, but there is evidence of a 'Pacific' design style developing. To traditional Lancashire quality will have to be added, therefore, freshness of design with a definite 'Australian look', at least about some of it.

Our Continental competitors - Swiss, Italians, French, Germans and Dutch - sell most of their cloths by merit of fabric, or of design. This is competition from the top level, where we can gain by our own effort or lose by lack of it. The designs are

good and their technical reproduction is excellent. Lancashire produces cloth in great bulk and many of these Continental fabrics are scarcely suitable for production in large quantity. They are fabrics which sell by their exclusive appeal and Lancashire will have to retain all her flexibility and inventiveness to combat these determined and talented competitors.

The exhibition covered Australia city by city and examples were shown of most cotton fabrics, where design is important, which are being sold by Lancashire's competitors. Consequently no British examples were included. The Lancashire cotton industry has an exporting tradition, which in the past has depended little on design originality. The Cotton Board has realised that if Lancashire's exports are to continue to be a major item in the country's overseas trade then ever increasing attention to design is a vital necessity.

#### SWISS AND FRENCH DRESS MATERIALS

*RIGHT These cotton dress materials have a silk look. All three designs are fresh and new, and the printing is extremely good.*



#### DUTCH AND SWISS FURNISHING FABRICS

*LEFT The Dutch cloth is the woven stripe effect and the Swiss materials are high-quality prints freshly drawn in good colours.*





## ITALY

'Golden Compass'  
competition

THE OBJECT OF THE 1954 'Golden Compass' competition organised by La Rinascente, a large Milan store, was to reward industrialists and their employees who had designed products that are technically and aesthetically satisfying. Dress, furnishing, sports equipment and toys were some of the categories in the competition, and show its wide scope. The judges were Aldo Borletti, Cesare Brustio, Gio Ponti, Alberto Rosselli and Marco Zanuso,

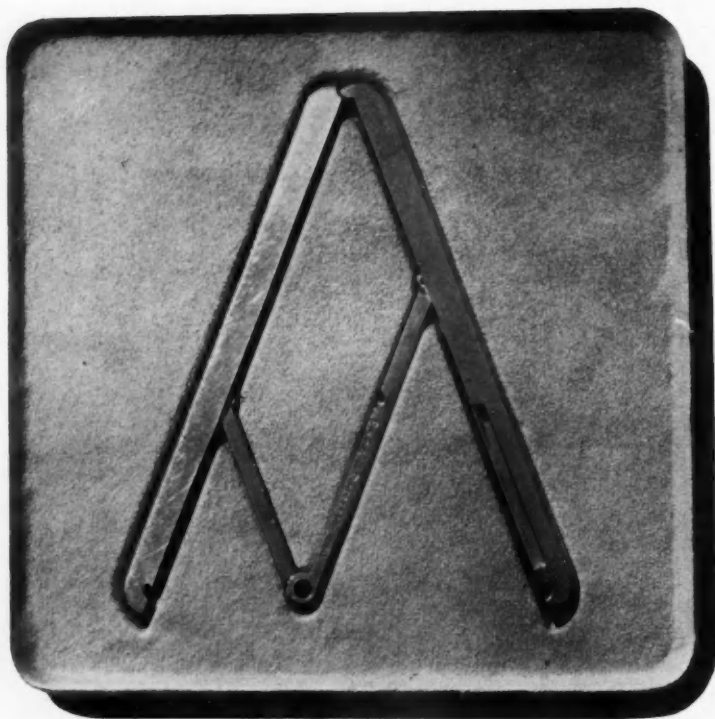
and they awarded diplomas to the makers of 200 products which were of a high design standard, these products being shown in a public exhibition at Il Circolo della Stampa, at the 'Tenth Triennale' in Milan. From this exhibition the judges then made a second selection, and awarded 15 'Golden Compasses' to the firms whose work seemed most creditable. 'Plates of Honour' and 100,000 lire were distributed to the designers, the awards being given "with solemn ceremony", at the 'Triennale' itself, during the International Congress for Industrial Design. We reproduce here some of the exhibits including a selection of 'Golden Compass' winners from among the 5,700 products submitted by 470 Italian firms.

In view of the success of the competition it is proposed to repeat it this year, and to extend its scope so that "the best products in the world" can be seen side by side with the most advanced Italian design.

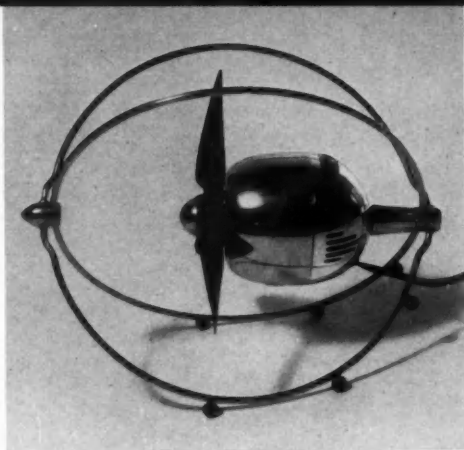
BELOW The hall in which the products receiving awards were exhibited at the 'Tenth Triennale'. The screen on the right is made up of a series of motifs derived from the 'Golden Compass' (left). On the wall is a fresco by E. Prampolini.



LEFT The 'Golden Compass', designed by Gio Ponti and Alberto Rosselli, is the award given by La Rinascente for the best 15 designs.



RIGHT Zerowatt table fan designed by Ezio Pirelli and made by Fabbriche Elettromeccaniche Riunite, Milan. Awarded 'Golden Compass 1954'.



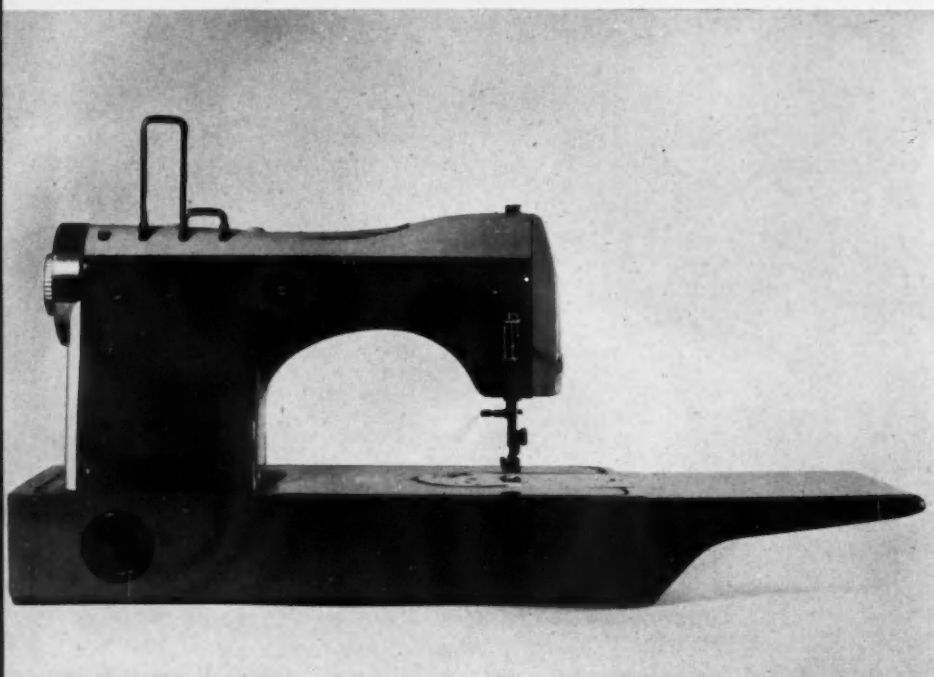
BELOW This ashwood chair, which can be easily dismantled for packing and transport, received high praise from the judges of the 'Golden Compass'. It was designed by Carlo De Carli and made by the Ditta Figli di A. Cassina, Meda. Awarded 'Golden Compass 1954'.

BELOW Arm chair of thick felt, made rigid by special folds in the back. The arms are constructed by bending the same sheet of felt. Legs are of burnished iron. Designed by Gerli and made by Forma.

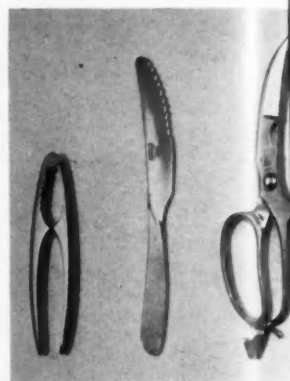


Design: Number 78

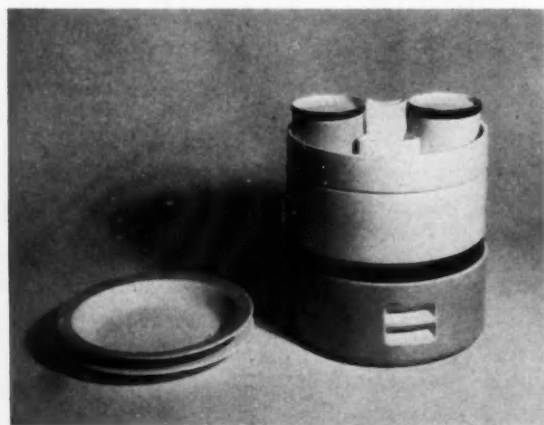




LEFT 'BU' sewing machine designed by Marcello Nizzoli, and made by Necchi, Pavia. Awarded 'Golden Compass 1954'.



RIGHT Nutcracker, beef steak knife and chicken carver in rust-proof steel. They were designed by Silvio Rota and made by Ri Cama, Milan.



ABOVE This table service, which can be stacked into the minimum space when not in use, was designed by Giovanni Gariboldi and made by Richard Ginori, Milan. Awarded 'Golden Compass 1954'.



RIGHT 'La Martingala' (or 'The Breeches') chair designed by Marco Zanuso and made by Arflex, Milan. Its cover can be slipped off easily and quickly by untying at the back.

## GERMANY

MARGARET LEISCHNER, head of the Weaving Department of the R C A School of Textile Design, has returned from a recent visit to Germany. In this report she describes her impressions of design standards in the German textile and consumer products industries.

JULICH, MY FIRST STOP in Germany, is a new town. Only two per cent escaped destruction, which was difficult to believe because it did not look new. Old building lines had been retained, possibly even the size and arrangement of windows. There

seemed to have been no co-ordinated planning to rebuild in the idiom of our time. I gained the same impression in nearly every other town, except perhaps in Stuttgart and Frankfurt. There the opportunity had been seized to rebuild according to present day requirements and amenities of city life. I spoke to the town architect of Cologne who told me that wonderful new plans had been made, but that they could not be put into practice because the owners of these ruins would not agree to give up an inch of their land. So the narrow streets of old Cologne will remain inadequate to take the modern traffic. The most interesting single buildings I saw were the head office of a rayon factory designed by E. Eiermann, and the new Textile

School by Pfau in Krefeld. Neither of these buildings had the monotony of some modern architecture; both showed that new materials and methods used imaginatively can create a most elegant appearance.

### Plastic fabrics

I had come to Germany to see developments in design, particularly of textiles. The interior of the first hotel I stayed in could have been put into an exhibition as a showpiece. The very good choice of materials, combined with excellent workmanship and flawless finish down to the smallest detail, was impressive. In hotels, cafés and offices generally, extensive use had been made of plastic sheeting for curtains and upholstery fabrics. The treatment of its

*This excellently produced catalogue of designs for plastic sheeting is by Göppinger Kaliko und Kunstleder Werke GmbH. A medium weight fabric in a bold black, white and red design has been used on the cover. Full page photographs showing the good draping quality of those fabrics intended for curtaining are juxtaposed to actual samples. On the right is shown one of the translucent curtain fabrics with opaque white abstract motifs showing some of the unusual qualities of this new material. All designs are by Professor Bode.*





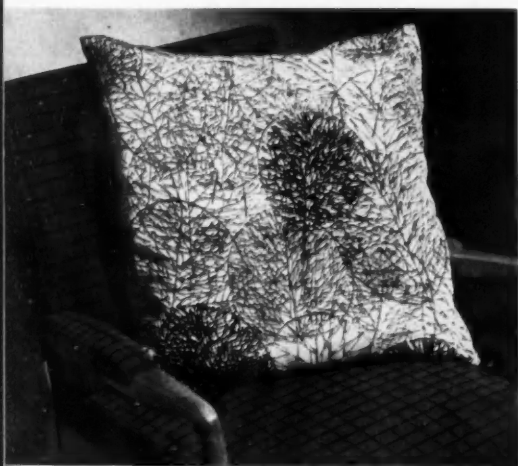
design and colouring gave one a feeling of cheerfulness, without it looking cold or too hygienic. One of the main producers of this fabric is the Göppinger Kaliko und Kunstleder Werke GmbH in Württemberg (available in this country through Primavera, Sloane Street). It is produced in three weights: a light weight for curtains, tablecloths and wall coverings, medium for upholstery and a heavy weight for floor covering. The light and most of the medium weight fabrics have a great variety of surface textures, from satin finish to deep embossing which, in breaking the light reflections, give the illusion of warmth in handling and appearance. The designer of the Göppinger plastics is Professor A. Bode, who teaches at the Werk-Akademie Kassel. The designs are fresh and vigorous in scale and col-

ouring, abstract in character and give a distinctive quality to these fabrics not easily associated with plastics.

### Printed and woven textiles

Textiles were less exciting, especially the woven materials. The best I saw were at Knoll International GmbH, Stuttgart. The only ones of interest were what we now term 'deep texture' in brilliant colours. The colouring of printed textiles had a definite clarity, though the tone values were often kept very close. The abstract patterns which are predominantly used are large in scale and fluid in line, retaining a relationship to natural form and growth. By far the most outstanding designs to be seen were produced by Stuttgarter Gardinenfabrik Herrenberg, near Stuttgart. This firm produced before the war fabrics of no great artistic merit.

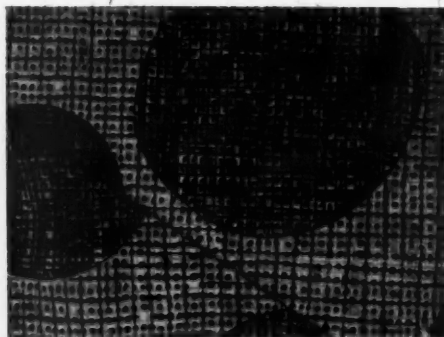
Dr Goltermann, who became director of the firm some years ago, brought about a complete change of policy, and discontinued the usual method employed by the textile industry in forming its new collections. These collections are usually made from outside studios, where the salesman, who is a dictator as far as design is concerned, takes the safe course of selecting patterns not too different from his own or his competitors' previous ranges. Dr Goltermann believes that the artist is an essential member of his team of technicians and businessmen, and he therefore co-opted his designer, Margaret Hildebrand, as director. She is in the happy, but at the same time most responsible, position of deciding which of her designs should be produced, and she supervises production. Often she will accompany



ABOVE The leaf design by Margaret Hildebrand, printed on a rep-rayon fabric, shows how her abstract patterns are derived from natural forms.

ABOVE RIGHT This printed fabric has a repeat of more than one square yard and was designed by Margaret Hildebrand for theatre curtains.

RIGHT Margaret Hildebrand produced this design in many rich colours giving an effect of stained glass. Her fabrics are produced by Stuttgarter Gardinenfabrik of which she is one of the directors.



RIGHT Cuno Fischer, freelance designer, concentrates on large-scale patterns which have great strength in composition and colour. Produced by Elberdrucke Hagen/Westfalen

RIGHT CENTRE Another design by Cuno Fischer for Emte Stuttgart. It is large in scale and has an elegant rhythm in the arrangement and drawing of the pattern



the salesmen on their visits, and so is fully aware of the reaction of the public to her collection. Her designs, whether abstract or floral in character, show vitality in line, a fine sense of pattern and excellent colour. I was surprised that some designs were presented equally successfully in twelve colourways. She has recently extended her activities to the design of wallpapers and décor for china.

Another firm with its own handwriting is Pausa A/G at Mössingen. There are freelance designers such as Elsbeth Kupferoth and Glatzer. Their designs, mostly abstract, are extremely bold and large in repeat. They gain in interest and softness by a variety of printed textures.

Elbersdrucke Hagen/Westfalen employ a young and promising artist, Cuno Fischer. He showed designs of vigorously flowing pattern

and interesting colourings.

It appears that wallpapers are not used as one of the main decorative features in interiors. Eminent artists such as Rene Sintenis and Tajiri are commissioned by wallpaper manufacturers. The results are illustrative line drawings of human, animal and architectural forms on the palest of grounds, giving only the barest suggestion of textural pattern to the wall surface. Marburg Tapetenfabrik show a range of designs by students of the Werk-Akademie Kassel. Their charm lies in their textural quality on pastel grounds, not dissimilar to those produced by the Bauhaus in 1930.

### Arrested development

The best china at reasonable prices is being produced by the Kahla Konzern, combining Arzberg and Schönwald production. The late

Dr Herman Gretsch and his successor, Heinz Löffelhardt, have designed near classical shapes in pure white which are – with few exceptions – undecorated.

A most inspiring visit was paid to the exhibition of tapestries by Ida Kerkovious at Stuttgart, in celebration of her seventieth birthday. Born on the Baltic coast, she uses vivid colours, nearly Slav in their sharpness, although she has spent some time in Italy. Her style is nearer the Finnish tapestries than those of recent French creation.

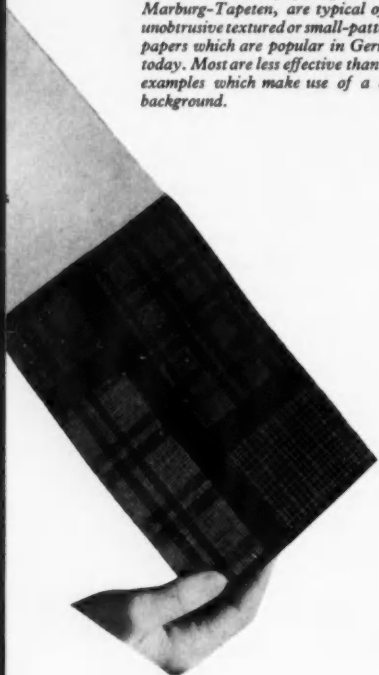
Travelling through Germany, the feeling grows that design development has been arrested since the days before Hitler's influence began to be felt. The average appearance of consumer goods, with a few exceptions, is reminiscent of the achievements of the 'thirties.

RIGHT Again natural forms are combined with abstract shapes in this design by Elsbeth Kupferoth. Produced by Pausa A/G Mössingen.



Design: Number 78

BELOW These wallpapers, produced by Marburg-Tapeten, are typical of the unobtrusive textured or small-patterned papers which are popular in Germany today. Most are less effective than these examples which make use of a black background.



ABOVE The two floral wallpapers on the left are designed by Margaret Hildebrand and show the versatility of this designer. The 'town' paper on the right is by Shinkichi Tajiri. Produced by Rasch Künstlertapeten; U K importers E. N. Heath & Co Ltd.

LEFT Coffee-service designed by Heinz Löffelhardt for the Shönwald and Arzberg porcelain factory. This firm's production is entirely of modern pottery, most of it undecorated, the emphasis being on pleasing and practical shapes.



RIGHT This tapestry, designed and made by Ida Kerkovious, is entitled 'The couple in the garden'. It is partly knotted and partly in tapestry technique using various materials.



# NEWS

## REPORTS & COURSES

### SIA diplomas

The SIA is now giving diplomas to its fellows and members, for after 23 years of existence it feels that its record, standing and sturdy establishment give point and substance to the award. This year's annual general meeting marked the inauguration of the diploma, when Sir Stephen Tallents presented diplomas to three past presidents, Milner Gray, Christian Barman and Lynton Lamb. At the meeting a presentation was made to Mrs A. Young, who has been executive secretary of the SIA since 1945, and is now relinquishing her post on her remarriage. As a token of Mrs Young's work in the Society and for the profession, the council has elected her to the Hon Fellowship. She is the first woman to receive this distinction. And as a token of the personal regard in which she has always been held by members of the Society, Mr Gray, fellow and past president of the SIA, presented her with a silver teapot and a substantial cheque.

The SIA has brought out a register of the names and addresses of its members, which is available to any member of the Society without charge. Others may purchase the register for 25 9d post free from 7 Woburn Square, London WC1.

### Furniture teachers

A course for teachers of furniture subjects has now been arranged by the Warden of Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Bucks. A similar, very successful course was held at the Abbey during Easter in 1953 and the organisers hope that once again teachers from all parts of the country will come to the course at Great Missenden this year. The object of the course is to present the latest developments in the various aspects of furniture production, and there are to be lectures and discussions on 'new' timbers, surface finishes, high frequency and other gluing methods, and present day trends in design. There will also be sessions on work study and on technical education in general for the furniture industry. Visits will be paid to the Forest Products Research Laboratories at Princes Risborough, to furniture manufacturing firms and to the High Wycombe College of Further Education. The course lasts from July 4-7, and among the speakers are Ernest Race, A. S. Heal and Paul Reilly. Letters should be addressed to the Warden (Sir John Sargent), Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Bucks. (Tel Great Missenden 2328.)

### Creative engineering

To help meet industry's demand for new ideas and products, a summer programme of 'Creative Engineering and Product Design' will be offered by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from June 20-July 1. Professor Ernest H. Huntress, director of the MIT summer session, points out in announcing the programme

that "considerable emphasis will be placed on the management of creative personnel". The results of a number of research programmes in this area are to be reported for the first time, and 'case histories' of interesting solutions to design problems will be presented by men closely associated with their development. The 'case histories', of which there will be at least three, are to be assigned for supervised group discussion and eventual individual solution. Those taking the course will be urged to bring 'company' problems with them so that they can be presented and discussed in some of the day sessions reserved for that purpose, or in informal evening groups. Full details and application forms for this course may be obtained from the Summer Session Office, Rooms 7-103, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge 39, U.S.A.

## EXHIBITIONS

### A dual BIF

The British Industries Fair is to be held at two different times of the year from 1956 onwards. The first show will be at Earls Court, London, from February 22-March 2.

The second will be at Olympia, London, and Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, from April 23-May 4. Kenneth Horne, who besides being well known as a television and radio entertainer is also a prominent businessman, has been appointed full-time managing director of the Fair. He is at present one of the six directors of British Industries Fair Ltd, the company formed last year to take over the Fair from the Board of Trade and to promote it as a commercial undertaking. Mr Horne will give up his position as sales director of Triplex Safety Glass Ltd, where he has worked for 27 years. He will take over his new job after this year's fair from the present general manager, Mr J. L. Reading, who directed the two previous Fairs and was lent by the Board of Trade to help the new company in its first year.

### Expanded metal exhibition

To display the industrial, commercial and domestic uses of its products the Expanded Metal Co Ltd of West Hartlepool and London recently held a successful exhibition at the Exchange Engineering Centre, Birmingham. Among the examples on view were expanded metals for reinforcement and building work of all kinds, electrical

*One of the bedrooms in the Leofric hotel for Ind Coope and Alsopp Ltd which was opened recently in Coventry. The hotel is discussed on page 8 and a fully illustrated article will be published shortly in DESIGN.*





resistors, grilles, walkways, and barriers. Particular interest was aroused by recent developments involving the use of expanded aluminium and of flattened expanded metal. Several hundred visitors from Birmingham and other Midland centres toured the display during the three days it was open. A similar, and even more comprehensive exhibition was held by the company at C. W. Bouchier Hall, 20 Newport Street, Cardiff, for three days, from May 24-26.

### MOW Building Plant Exhibition

The Ministry of Works Building Plant Exhibition, which is to be held on the Queenslie Industrial Estate, Glasgow, from June 8-June 15 inclusive, will be opened by the Rt Hon Lord Bilsland. The opening ceremony will take place at 3 pm on Wednesday, June 8. On following days the hours of opening to the public will be 10.30-6, with extended time until 8 on Friday, June 10, and Tuesday, June 14. More than 60 exhibitors will occupy space in the 150,000 sq ft of exhibition area, and the exhibits will cover the whole range of modern building plant equipment and tools.

### Advertising exhibition

An exhibition sponsored by 'The Times', and called 'Art in British Advertising', is to be held in the RBA Gallery, Suffolk Street, London, next November. The exhibition will last three weeks, and the final entry date is June 30. Forms can be obtained from Mrs M. E. Manasse, Organising Secretary, Exhibition 'Art in British Advertising', 44 Belgrave Square, London SW1.

### Heal's new designs

Among Heal's designs for 1955 recently shown at the Mansard Gallery was this dressing-table. Its attractive pattern on stain-resisting plastic was specially designed by Sheila Walters to decorate the bedroom suite by Nigel Walters. Other pieces on view made extensive use of unusual woods and veneers, enamelled surfaces, pigskin and rough-cast glass. Another notable new trend in design was the extensive use of brass, serving both as decoration and as part of the structure.



### Italian industrial design

There will be an exhibition of some 30 examples of Italian industrial design at the Italian Institute of Culture, 39 Belgrave Square, London SW1, from June 30-July 30. Among the exhibitors are Olivetti, Necchi, Fiat and Ginori. The exhibition will be opened by Sir Gordon Russell, Director CoID, in the presence of the Italian Ambassador on June 29.

### 'Trade Fairs Overseas'

With increasing competition in world markets, firms interested in exporting their products have to consider carefully to what extent they should participate in the growing number of overseas fairs. The problem is to ensure that results justify the outlay, and a handy and comprehensive little booklet has at long last appeared, brimful of invaluable advice to would-be exhibitors on what to do and what to avoid. 'Trade Fairs Overseas; Hints for United Kingdom Exhibitors' is published for the Board of Trade by H M Stationery Office. Price 1s.

## COMPETITIONS

### Laminated plastics

A competition in design for laminated plastic surfacing materials is being organised by Richard Klinger Ltd. It is open to art students only, and offers prizes ranging from £100-£5. The closing date is June 30 and entry forms and information concerning the rules and conditions are obtainable from Dept Evp, Richard Klinger Ltd, Klingerit Works, Sidcup, Kent.



### Electric sign competition

The first illuminated sign design competition to be held in this country (DESIGN December 1954 page 43 and February 1955 page 50) was sponsored by the Electrical Sign Manufacturers' Association and has been won by J. K. W. Hopgood, above, who receives a cheque for £100. The second prize of £50 is awarded to R. W. Pepper, and the third of £35 to Stanley Rickard. There were two other consolation prizes of £25.

### Travelling scholarship

The response to the announcement for the Marley Tile travelling scholarship (DESIGN February page 49), value £750, totalled some 72 applications from all parts of the world. The assessors were unanimous in awarding the scholarship to Gordon Graham of Nottingham. Mr Graham is 34 years old. He is in private practice and is a lecturer at the School of Architecture, College of Arts and Crafts, Nottingham. He was awarded the Arthur Cates Prize at the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1953 and the Essay Prize by the Anglo-Brazilian Society in 1954.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Higher fees for Trade Marks

Since April 1 higher renewal fees have been charged for Trade Marks registrations due to expire after June 30, and after the latter date there will be a general increase in the fees payable in respect of a number of trade mark matters. The fees have remained substantially unchanged for many years despite considerable increases in administrative costs. This change is announced by the Board of Trade which has recently laid before Parliament revised rules amending those made under the Trade Marks Act, 1938.

### London publishers in America

Newman Neame Ltd announce the formation of a new company in America, which will bear the same name, and plans to have offices in New York and Los Angeles. This move represents the fulfilment of the founders' original intentions when Newman Neame Ltd was started in London six years ago. Mr Harry Newman, who has recently returned from an exploratory visit to the U S A, will be leaving for New York at the end of March to build up the activities of the American firm. A major feature of the initial programme will be publishing for television interests, and it is hoped to maintain close relation between the British and American companies on all matters capable of development in the U S.

## Design department

A new Packing Design and Development Department has been recently opened at the Chipping Warden Centre of Export Packing Service Ltd, which has packing depots at Banbury, Sittingbourne, Merthyr Tydfil and Cardiff. Midland manufacturers now have on their doorstep a specialised service for the study of their products from the point of view of packing, and for the provision of packing designs that take fully into account every factor of the construction and materials of those products, as well as varied conditions of transit and storage.

## Design administrator

Peter Muller-Munk Associates, Pittsburgh Product Designers, announces the appointment of William A. Richards as executive assistant. Formerly associated with the Bell & Howell Company where he was administrative assistant to the engineering vice-president, Mr Richards brings with him wide experience in administrative management.

## New designer

The Worcester Royal Porcelain Co Ltd has appointed Jack Kinnear to be its design consultant on packaging, typography and presentation.

## 'House Equipment'

B. T. Batsford Ltd announces that it will not publish the book on 'House Equipment' by Donald R. Stewart referred to in DESIGN March page 21.

## Announcement

'Electronics illuminated', DESIGN April pages 42-43: light fittings were designed by Eduard R. Robbins of the Lighting Division of Philips Electrical Ltd. The fittings themselves are from the company's standard range of modern light fittings, known as the 'Windermere' and the double cone 'Woking'.

## High Commissioner's visit

The High Commissioner for Canada, Mr N. A. Robertson, accompanied by Mrs Robertson recently visited the London headquarters of the CoID for a preview of exhibits chosen for the Board of Trade's 'Modern U K' stand at the 1955 Canadian National Exhibition. Here they are seen enjoying a joke with Alec Gardner-Medwin, Industrial Officer at the CoID, as they inspect a range of suitcases.



# LETTERS

## Caravan controversy

In the following letter A. H. Bull comments on the criticisms made by Charles Panter, Director of Berkeley Coachwork Ltd (DESIGN February pages 40 and 41), on a caravan design by J. Y. Johnstone published in DESIGN October 1954 page 43.

SIR: I have been designing, building, towing and occupying my own trailer caravans for 20 years. The first was made in 1932. From an appreciation of the products of his company, I can detect in Mr Panter's criticisms of Mr Johnstone's project a note of dismay.

A trailer is and always has been a medium to high speed road vehicle - primarily and essentially mobile - and makers who have ignored this have merely encouraged an artificially created public demand which can be met in other ways at lower cost and with less misrepresentation - chalets and the like.

Mr Johnstone's design is a good one. It may not be the ultimate that could utilise the specified materials, but it is surely churlish to decry its merit bearing in mind that, of constructors using traditional materials and methods, very few design for the best appearance or the best function, or indeed (in the sense that CoID understands) design at all.

If I might, with respect, criticise constructively, it could be said that in a quasi-teardrop form, appearance-design is better satisfied in putting a blunt end forward and a tapering profile aft, even though airflow can largely be disregarded in the comparatively low speeds involved. The aim of the reverse application in this example is to fair-in the towbar. In this case it is done solely on appearance grounds, but could not the form of the vehicle be equally attractive - as indeed Mr Johnstone demonstrates - were the towing-gear exposed in the more conventional manner? At the same time the turning-angle of trailer to towbar encourages a curved front end in preference to an overlong exposed towbar.

The present trend in car design - with which, as the two are seen in conjunction, that of the trailer may happily be related - is to be rather more oblong with round corners than previously, and swept lines ought to be used with reserve. To most caravan manufacturers these points are a completely unknown subtlety. What a pity the side verges of the 'Europa' windows slope the wrong way (though we know it is to avoid restriction of internal fittings found in the prototype) and that the appearance of the towbar-fairing lacks imagination.

The opposition to the materials and methods proposed by Mr Johnstone can surely be dismissed. The only - repeat only - reason why traditional materials and methods are employed is because they are, at present, cheaper: and while this is a very good reason (as I know because my firm made too few caravans too well) it will not be good for ever.

I submit that opposition to good design (or just design) in new media is not forward-looking, and in fact is surprising in an officer of a company of the capacity of Berkeley Coachwork Ltd which has obviously little to fear since it is well equipped to experiment and forestall competitors. In fact Mr Panter's company is not unenterprising: witness the 'Baronet' and the 'Europa'; both excellent up to a point. It is

simply that no buying public likes any current design until the market for styles which it has known for a long time becomes saturated and production of them is curtailed, at which time it will accept a new product provided the man next door has got one first.

We know Mr Panter has been to the U S A and hope he won't be led too far into verandahs, window-boxes and wrought iron decoration. He also takes pride, elsewhere, in his company's imagination to develop new ideas - yet here rails at others for experiment.

The reputable traditional builder has not really to fear 'Johnstone-ish' design (since he can do it himself) but rather the entry on the trailer market of the car makers with their prestools - and, one might whisper, their present acquaintance with glass fibre moulding. Should the trailer market become big enough to attract them and they enter it with their facilities, those who retain traditional materials and methods may indeed be out of business, whereas Mr Johnstone may well be a trailer-styling consultant to a motor car firm. Or has Berkeley a plastic caravan shell up its sleeve?

In more particular (and from experience) I have some detailed comments:

1 It is elementary that nose-heaviness is required. The Johnstone concentration of so much forward weight cannot be as wrong as Mr Panter protests. Although it looks more, one must concede that the designer must have calculated his figure of 110 lb on coupling (including the gas cylinder?) which is moderate but adequate. While 90 per cent of present makers do little in the way of calculating weight-distribution (they simply make their vans to 'balance', or the slightly more knowledgeable make them nose-heavy but rarely know by how much until they've made them) it is in fact fairly simple to arrive on the drawing-board at the static hitch loading. It can clearly be made variable to suit the robustness of the proposed towcar, according to location of some movable equipment, such as the content of water containers. One should be able permanently to stow gas cylinders inboard (although, again on the score of cheapness, how many makers assume you will carry this item in your car boot, or a bedding-locker, and put it outside the trailer on the site) and it is not a good thing to have to move heavy equipment, such as blankets and mattresses or lighting batteries, from their proper housing. Hence it will sometimes be found that the kitchen, with its heavy installations, can well be located at the rear while permitting the set-back axle. In fact if the Johnstone design were turned round, its axle moved nearer the door (the latter moved an inch or two as well if necessary - incidentally what a nice shaped door), the sunflap (my pet abomination) dispensed with and the towbar put on that end, it would be an equally good design. Not that there is much wrong with it as it is.

2 Three jacks for this trailer would undoubtedly be sufficient, although four are better if a design will allow. The means of operating can be arranged in no matter what shape of shell. No one has criticised the 'Europa' jacks as far as I know, and their operation is of a kind not previously employed in caravans.

3 A translucent roof has disadvantages in that it admits light when not wanted, and if nothing in the way of insulation obstructs its translucence, it will be over-hot under the sun. One quite large maker discovered this long ago and his products, of revolutionary design and also employing extensive plastic fabrications, are apparently accepted by a certain public although his prices are in the main more than 60 per cent higher for comparable accommodation than those of Mr Panter's company.

Making the material opaque is simple if

insulation is employed, and the fixing incorporated in the stressed plastic panel would obviate supplementary framing. In fact the designed area of fenestration and roof-lighting, and even the limited attention to air-circulation, would seem to be ample. Many vans are over-windowed, the purchaser forgetting that if he has little unbroken wall he has less space for furniture, a reduced area where, when inside, he cannot be overlooked, and so much less wall-surface capable of insulation. Caravaning, except abroad, is not all warmth and sunshine but, given heat, it is quite possible to hold down internal temperature without extravagant window area.

The end windows could certainly be made to open, if that is necessary even if compound-curved on all edges; and they could be watertight – it would simply cost more.

4 Provided that it does not – as appears from inspection – exceed the permitted dimensions, provided it has brakes (even if over-run operated), tyres and suspension for both wheels, carries a number plate and, on a highway during darkness, the statutory lighted lamps and reflectors, and does not behave in motion or at rest in such a manner as to inconvenience other road-users – as nothing in its design suggests – it cannot contravene any Road Act regulation and this seems an unworthy implication. No doubt Mr Panter has seen on the road, as have we all, constructions even from widely known makers which would vastly more deserve such an opinion.

5 The design clearly is practicable. One-off it is admittedly expensive: in quantity it would be a menace to traditional builders because it would then be cheaper. It looks safe, and is styled with flair (I do not like the downward tapering nose, but that is a matter of personal taste). The accommodation appears ample and not by any means uncomfortable. Even the possibility that the front rake could restrict working surfaces has been neatly avoided. If its three legs are the only reason it would “under some circumstances [be] impossible to site” in what way would the conventional four make this possible – we don’t pitch with a wheel up one side and down the other, you know – not if we respect our undergear. “An amateur in a backyard”? ... Come, Mr Panter, that species does not do design and draughting like this, as you are well aware, and such an oft-used mass-producer’s cliché does not become a specialist of your accomplishments.



It is possible to produce trailer shells in plastics. Curves and large area formed stressed panels are not impossible. There is such a trailer, and very nice it looks (see illustration above) even though constructed in steel, aluminium, duralumin, glass, rubber and plastics. It is 17 ft 6 inches long and the complete shell, with roof-lining and insulation and a 1-inch plastic floor, weighs 13 cwt and tows at 55 mph in a dead straight line. I designed it and made it and it stands in my forecourt, when it's not moving.

A. H. BULL  
‘Crossroads’  
Kingswood  
Aylesbury, Bucks

## In all directions

SIR: Mr Noel Carrington's comments on the relative merits of capitals and ‘upper and lower’ in road signs are most ill-judged (DESIGN April pages 23–27).

There is absolutely no justification for saying that ‘at speed and from a distance’ Bern is easier to read than BERN or Salzburg than SALZBURG, at any rate for people brought up in the use of ‘Roman’ lettering. The case may be different among German-reading people, whose traditions of lettering are largely built upon the use of ‘Gothic’, which does not allow combinations of capitals. The proper practice in Britain is to use capitals for displayed words, such as place-names on sign-posts, and ‘upper and lower’ for continuous reading, as on long parking notices. This practice has the advantage of orderliness, always an aid to recognition. Also, it can be justified aesthetically. Continuous text will provide enough ascending and descending letters to make a satisfactory overall pattern, whereas a word like Bern displayed alone on a board falls away weakly. (The use of disproportionately large minuscules in Mr Carrington's photograph is no doubt a recognition of this difficulty; of course, it reduces the very advantage he claims for the use of upper- and lower-case lettering.) Incidentally, may I commend the principles declared above to whoever is responsible for the layout of your own journal? What is gained by the restless variety of your headings? It is clear what is lost – order, pattern, simplicity and almost everything else for which I should expect your organisation to stand. Try.

BROOKE CRUTCHLEY  
University Press  
Cambridge

SIR: I am reluctant to take issue with Mr Noel Carrington, with whose strictures on the inadequacy of our street and traffic signs I so heartily agree. But some of his more sweeping assertions really cannot be allowed to pass unchallenged. Our advance direction signs, he says, are ‘faulty’ because “the road numbers ... take precedence in position and size over the place name”. Now whether traffic routes are more conveniently identified by numbers or by place names is a large question, and one that has been exhaustively argued and can hardly be re-opened in the columns of DESIGN. A route number embraces every town and village on the route, and is therefore a composite means of identification which replaces a list of perhaps fifty names; the place name, on the other hand, gives no indication of other places which are reached either *en route* to it or beyond it. Mr Carrington is entitled to his preferences; but in asserting that to give precedence to a route number renders a sign faulty he is exceeding his terms of reference: the matter is simply not within the scope of aesthetic criticism.

In my view the advance direction sign, which gives prior warning of a road junction with often as many as four or five intersecting routes, is, in conception, a legible, lucid and thoroughly efficient piece of design. (In execution it suffers inevitably from the unfortunate alphabet designed by the Maybury [1933] Committee, and from being produced by draughtsmen without typographic supervision.) These signs are used extensively in urban areas, and it is misleading to contrast them with those marking a simple intersection on Continental autobahnen, on which the nature and degree of information is not comparable.

Mr Carrington's affirmation of the superior legibility of lower-case letters on signs will be received with interest by typographers. It is generally agreed that capitals are fatiguing to read in quantity, but how often does a LONG LINE OF CAPITALS appear on a traffic sign? “I must admit”, he says,

“that authorities whose opinion I greatly respect still favour the capital, but the real test is legibility at speed and from a distance”: thus implying that the comparative legibility of the alternatives has been measured under the conditions specified, and the authorities found to be in error. Does he really mean this?

Commenting on the illustration of a Swiss sign, Mr Carrington remarks that “variation in the size of letters ... produces a more distinguishing effect, as does the use of white on a blue background”. Since it is not clear what is meant by a distinguishing effect, this statement can hardly be contradicted. A blue sign may well be more conspicuous than a white one; it is not however true that white on blue is a more legible combination than black on white. As for the practice of distorting letter forms so as to compel words of such disparate length as BASEL and SCHAFFHAUSEN to occupy the same width, the author's apparent approval will scarcely command wide agreement. Traffic signs are produced in large numbers by semi-skilled labour, and the only hope of a reasonably uniform standard lies in the imposition of a sound typeface. That sign makers be given licence to distort letter forms at their own discretion is surely a most dangerous and retrogressive proposition.

NORBERT DUTTON  
26 Beccroft Road  
London SE4

## BOOKS

**Dyed and Printed Fabrics, June Hobson, The Dryad Press, Leicester, 5s.**

This admirable little handbook should be a help to those who know nothing about ‘How to do it’, but would like to try. The aims as set out in the introduction are all that could be desired in a book of this sort, but although well and clearly written, brevity has been carried a little too far. A few more alternative methods of doing things, particularly in the screen-printing section, need not have confused even a beginner. It is also rather disappointing to find that the reader is only once reminded that the way is open for experiment. It is necessary to point out to a beginner – or it may never occur to him – that a technique once mastered can be improved upon or altered.

The chapter on ‘Tie and Dye’ is well laid out, directions are clear and the illustrations sufficient. Being the simplest and most primitive of all pattern-making on cloth, it is the most suitable for children – though not to be despised by adults on this account. It would have been a help to have mentioned that a little ‘Cobra’ floor polish added to the wax prevents chipping and that more will prevent cracking should the reader want parts of his pattern uncracked.

Screen-making and printing are not easily learned from a book, but so far as they can be, the instructions are clear and easy to follow. There are, however, too many loopholes left for possible failure and consequent disheartening of the beginner. For example, the reader is left to find out for himself that two and a half inches is not the minimum space required for a colour trough on even a small screen; that more coats of gelatine entirely remove the screen-maker's bane – pinpricks; and that an untreated screen not protected by a transparent lacquer, or at least toughened by a formalin solution, easily stretches and becomes too loose, giving a blurred print.

ANNE LOOSELY



**Good and Bad Taste, Odd Brochmann** (translated by M. A. Michael), Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 18s

Professor Brochmann is not at all odd; his book is a commonsense analysis of this tenuous subject, and it is pleasantly free from specialised jargon. Taste is difficult because it embraces such a number of variables, and the social implications in the exercise of taste could have made this a textbook of aesthetic etiquette. Instead, with quiet clarity, the author explains the reasons behind the agreed preferences of experienced and sensitive people. He writes for the ordinary person of intelligence, who must assemble a home and state his judgment in choice of furniture, furnishings and equipment. A commentary in the form of marginal sketches runs parallel to the written matter, so that at any point there are familiar or traditional examples before the eye. Simple sketches, relevant only to the matter under discussion, are much more efficient than plates that contain a host of other characteristics for the mind to eliminate.

The book is so easily written, nearly always dealing with familiar material, that one is not conscious of its being a translation except by the occasional use of local examples where more urbane and purer examples could have been found outside Norway. Admittedly exotic things have more impact than familiar ones, but there is a case for a man's drawings, as well as his prose, being translated. These are minor matters in a most stimulating book that fearlessly embraces a tremendous scope. Had it been ten times as long - which the subject could be said to require for thorough consideration - it would have been hard reading and would have been read only by the specialist. The discussion of space, as distinct from volume and mass, is notable in a book of this kind; especially in the way that incomplete forms are shown to produce imagined counterparts, and the way that a sense of room is given by the placing of voids in a plan. There is no bibliography, which is a great pity; for any book that sets out to be a guide to the mind or eye has a duty to show the way to further thinking. J. BERESFORD-EVANS

**Graphic Design, John Lewis and John Brinkley, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 30s**

This is not graphic design as most readers will understand it. It is a small and carefully vetted part of creative design for print. At pains to establish the 'illustrator-designer's' superiority over his 'commercial artist' brother the authors set an unhealthy pattern of snobbishness and self-conscious good taste which pervades the book. Very few young artists can even begin to exist without some experience of commercial design, yet barely one example of commodity design is shown. It is comforting to know of the many exhibitions held in national and leading art galleries abroad of just such design without any damage to prestige. Contempt for the man paying the bill is dishonest, and phrases like "giving the client better design than he often deserves" and advocating an uncompromising attitude will quickly land a young and untried designer in the street.

Where the book deals factually with the history of type and lettering it is excellent and instructive. The illustrations are well chosen and illuminate the text. The notes on technical processes will be appreciated by students as a summary of what there is to learn. When they attempt a philosophy, however, the authors will be challenged at almost every point. They are obsessed with 'taste' which is, apparently, "the spark, the driving force in the design". The work chosen as the authors' answer to "what is good design?" is by tried men, yet as a group it seems emasculated and sadly lacking in that very robust vitality and honest



### Managerial modern

*Like the business executives whose offices were illustrated in DESIGN (March 1954 pages 7-9), the managing director of the A.C.-Delco Division of General Motors at Southampton also chose a modern desk. The setting has an exhilarating colour effect, achieved by the use of low-toned papers - green and red contrasting with white Venetian blinds - and acoustic tiles that balance the matt and shiny surfaces. Illumination by the Edison Swan Electric Co Ltd is provided in a recessed square, panelled with diffusing glass. The architects were Howard, Souster and Fairbairn.*

vulgarity without which graphic design will wither and become mere decoration.

ABRAM GAMES

**Glass Reinforced Plastics, edited by Phillip Morgan, Iliffe & Sons Ltd, 35s**

A most welcome book covering a new field of manufacture, where design is still largely empirical and where successful production techniques remain closely guarded secrets. Not that it is specifically revealing in either connection, but it does provide the first comprehensive picture of the whole subject.

Much of the book is for the specialist; the endless variations and permutations of 'Coon', 'Cooch', and 'Chock'; the continuous tube making machines; and to a lesser extent, the car and boatbuilding applications. But those of us who do not know an ester from a hole in the ground will find the chapters dealing with commercial moulding processes, design and properties of structures and miscellaneous applications of glass reinforced plastics amply rewarding. They give a good picture of the physical properties and possibilities of the materials, and of the processes and equipment involved. That they do not give an equally clear picture of design technique and of certain economic aspects is not altogether the fault of the authors. This is still a pioneer field, where a background of experience and reference has yet to be created, and where hard-won knowledge is not lightly bandied about. Those contemplating manufacture will have to experiment, and while this book will not eliminate any of the hazards likely to be encountered, it will enable them to be met with considerably greater confidence. It is amply illustrated and indexed.

F. C. ASHFORD

### Bound copies of DESIGN

There is still time to have copies of DESIGN for 1954 bound complete with index. The

cost is 13s 6d, and copies should be sent direct to BENHAM AND CO LTD, 12 Culver Street, Colchester, Essex.

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